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Inclusive Education – Perspectives of Students with Learning Disabilities, Their Parents, and Teachers

By

©

Linda Chmiliar

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ABSTRACT

One of the most significant changes in education over the last few decades is the movement towards inclusive education. Many schools have adopted an approach of educating students with learning disabilities in the regular classroom. The present study utilized a case study approach to examine the perspectives of key stakeholders in the inclusive classroom. In each case study, the perspective of the student with learning disabilities, a parent of that student, and the regular education teacher were obtained through interviews. The case studies were analyzed individually with attention paid to each individual in the case. Similarities and differences between the student, parent, and teacher perspectives were identified. In addition, the data were analyzed across cases and similarities and differences across students, parents, teachers, and across cases identified. Several practical implications arose from the research. First, parents need to be provided with encouragement and opportunities to become active partners in the IPP process. Second, it is important to consider student perspectives in the inclusive classroom. Third, opportunities for teachers of inclusive classrooms to collaborate can positively contribute to staff development and classroom problem solving. However, there is a need to provide teachers with adequate time and support for this process to occur. Further research is required to explore ways in which students' perceptions can be incorporated into decision making and how their perceptions might improve services in regular classroom settings. There is also a need to explore the impact of different adapted educational approaches on the academic progress of students with learning disabilities. The perspectives of other key stakeholders in the inclusive classroom such as the regular

classroom peers would provide a more detailed picture of the inclusive classroom.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background

One of the most significant changes in education over the last decades is the movement towards inclusive education. No longer is exceptionality equated with separate classrooms and programs, rather, students with special learning needs are being taught in regular classrooms. There is a movement in schools today from separate special education and regular education, to providing services to students in the most normal educational setting possible (Banerji & Dailey, 1995; Guetzloe, 1999). An increasing number of schools are adopting a philosophy of inclusive education that reflects the view that schools are communities in which everyone should feel that they belong, are accepted, and are respected and valued for their individuality. There has been a growing movement in Alberta towards the full inclusion of students with special needs into regular classrooms and neighbourhood schools. Alberta Education, in its policy, *Educational Placement of Students with Special Needs* (Policy 1.6.1), indicates that "educating students with special needs in regular classrooms in neighbourhood or local schools shall be the first placement option considered by school boards, in consultation with students, parents/guardians, and school staff" (Alberta Education, 1997a). A report by the Alberta Education Response Centre (1992) indicated that of the 14,212 students with learning disabilities in Alberta attending elementary school, 54% were placed in a full-time regular class and 43% were placed in partial inclusion. In total, 97% of elementary children with learning disabilities in Alberta were fully or partially included in the regular classroom.

Purpose and Nature of the Study

There is little documented, empirical evidence on the effects of full inclusion on students with learning disabilities (Vaughn & Schumm, 1995). On one hand there are studies indicating students with learning disabilities do not fare well academically and make minimal progress in the regular general education classroom (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Fernstrom, 1993; Klingner, Vaughn, Hughes, Schumm, & Elbaum, 1998). On the other hand there is research indicating that students with learning disabilities can achieve in the inclusive classroom (Jenkins et al., 1994; Manset & Semmel, 1997; Waldron & McLeskey, 1998). Unfortunately, the question of whether inclusive programs are effective using outcome measures such as criterion-referenced testing, reading tests, achievement tests, and sociometric techniques for students with learning disabilities is inconclusive.

As children with learning disabilities are increasingly included in regular classrooms, questions arise about whether or not inclusive education is successful from the perspective of the students, parents, and school personnel. Inclusive classrooms are diverse, dynamic settings with myriad relationships between students, teachers, and parents. Therefore, it is important that the perspectives and experiences of the stakeholders in inclusive education, the students with learning disabilities, their parents and teachers, be examined. There is a need for research to examine the multiple perspectives of stakeholders to develop a comprehensive picture of the inclusive classroom and to understand how the diverse aspects of inclusion are experienced by the stakeholders (Schumm & Vaughn, 1998). Listening to stakeholders can assist in the identification of the key components of successful inclusion programs, as well as the barriers to inclusion (Wilczenski et al., 1997).

The perspectives of teachers on inclusion have been reported at length in the literature (for e.g. Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden; 2000; Malone, Gallagher, & Long, 2001; Minke, Bear, Deemer, & Griffin, 1996; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Soodak, Podell, & Lehman; 1998; Stanovich, 1999; Valeo & Bunch, 1998; VanReusen, Shoho, & Barker, 2000; and Villa, Thousand, Meyers, & Nevin, 1996); however, fewer studies have been conducted on the attitudes of parents and their perspectives with respect to inclusion (Bennett, Deluca, & Bruns, 1997). The voices of students who are most affected by inclusion have been less frequently heard (Vaughn & Klingner, 1998) and students with learning disabilities have been a neglected source of information about inclusion (Schumm & Vaughn, 1998). The present study seeks to add to existing research by investigating the perspectives of students with learning disabilities, their parents, and teachers, to understand the inclusive classroom through the eyes of each stakeholder. The purpose of this study was to explore how students with learning disabilities, their parents, and teachers experience inclusion. This research took the form of five case studies. Each case study consisted of an interview with a student with learning disabilities, a parent of that student, and the student's regular education teacher. The case studies took place in three inclusive elementary schools.

Given the purpose of the research, it was necessary to use a method that examined the experience of the participants, their actions, thoughts, and feelings as a major focus for investigation and interpretation. Therefore, a qualitative approach to research design and analysis was employed.

The intent of this dissertation is to describe the experience of inclusion for the students with learning disabilities, their parents, and their regular education teachers, involved in this research. The results of this research provided information that may be useful and practical in helping parents and staff to develop effective inclusive education experiences for students with learning disabilities.

Bracketing of Personal Presuppositions and Beliefs

As part of the introduction to this research, it is necessary to identify and put aside my personal beliefs and understandings. Van Manen (1997) explains that one must "…suspend one's various beliefs in the reality of the natural world in order to study the essential structures of the world," (p. 175) and "…overcome one's subjective or private feelings, preferences, inclinations, or expectations that would prevent one from coming to terms with a phenomenon or experience…" (p. 185).

My interest in this area of research is grounded in my personal and professional experiences. The education professional in me agrees with the basic philosophy of inclusion and belonging. The personal side of me, the side that struggles daily with the challenges of parenting a child with special needs in an inclusive setting, is very aware of the real life experiences of inclusion that are not always positive. I believe in inclusion, but have reservations and concerns about the actual experience of inclusion for the student, parent, and teacher. Therefore, I will share with you, My Story, in an attempt to identify biases and presuppositions by providing information on my experiences and perspective including personal and professional information that may have affected data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

My Story

My story, as it relates to this research, has several parts. The first part has been the many positive experiences with inclusion I have experienced during my professional teaching career. Early in my teaching career I taught a class of preschool children with significant physical and cognitive disabilities. One year we decided to include a number of neighborhood children in the class alongside the children with disabilities. I particularly remember one little 5 year old boy with physical impairments, and cognitive and perceptual processing difficulties. This boy spent a great deal of his playtime alone, left out by the others. After a story at circle time that focused on helping and playing with others, one of the neighborhood boys quietly approached the boy with physical impairments during free time and took his hand to help him go play with the others. The grins on both of their faces could have lit up the room. Over many years I have had many opportunities to observe the positive benefits in the classroom of including students with learning difficulties.

The second part of my experience has been the opportunity to observe some of the negative social consequences for children not consistently included in the regular classroom. One of my teaching assignments was a class of children with mild to moderate delays in a segregated class in the school system. One day, one of the young girls came into class after recess and it was obvious she had been crying. When I asked her what was wrong, she whispered, "I would just like to have a friend." I had a similar experience several years later in another setting. The children I taught in a segregated class were isolated, and at times even afraid to venture into the realms of regular education. After two days of participation in a regular Grade 2 class, one of my

Grade 2 students whispered to me from under his desk, "Please don't make me go back there again." Despite the careful planning, coordination meetings, and preparation of the student, participation in the regular classroom was seen by the student to be very frightening.

The third part of my experience includes the frustration of working in schools where students with disabilities were placed in regular classrooms with no support or accommodations. Many times I had occasion to observe students and teachers in classrooms where the work was too difficult for the student and the challenges of the regular classroom seemingly insurmountable. I experienced overwhelming feelings of frustration when children misbehaved, or experienced difficulties trying to cope with the challenge of the regular classroom. I witnessed teachers who felt stretched beyond their capabilities, and threatened by children who were different. One day during the lunch hour I was approached in the hallway by a Grade 4 teacher. She said, "I do not want … in my class this afternoon. He cannot to the work….all he does is make me crazy!"

The fourth part of my experience revolves around that fact that I am a parent of a young child with significant learning difficulties. I have consistently pursued inclusive educational environments for her to participate in. During the preschool years, we faced a number of challenges, but the inclusive environment, playing with non-handicapped peers, was a very positive learning environment for her. Now my child attends a regular education classroom in an elementary school. I have seen issues surrounding inclusion from the teacher's perspective all of my professional career and now find that the parent's perspective and my child's experiences add a whole new dimension to the inclusion experience. Things are not as black and white anymore. I am continually faced with the challenge of trying to interpret my child's experience and perspective, as well as the challenges of trying to communicate what I believe is my child's perspective to the educators. I have discovered so many more dimensions to the inclusive classroom experience that challenge my previously held beliefs.

I have experienced inclusion as a parent and as a teacher, and been involved in many positive and negative situations. These experiences have contributed to my biases. However, now I want to learn more about the inclusion experience through the experiences of others. I approached this research with an openness to discover the "lived experiences" (Merriam, 1998, p. 4) of the students with learning disabilities, their parents, and teachers in the inclusive elementary school classroom.

Definitions

Five definitions need to be clarified before proceeding with the literature review. The first term, inclusion, is defined for the purposes of this paper as, *including students with disabilities in the general classroom, with the provision that, where necessary some special services to students may be provided outside the general education classroom* (Smith, Polloway, Patton, Dowdy & Heath, 2001, p. 440).

The second term that needs to be clarified is the definition of learning disabilities (LD). The students in this school jurisdiction, who participated in this study, were identified as having a learning disability based on criteria specified by Alberta Learning:

(a) The students have average or above average scores on measures of intellectual ability.

(b) The students experience difficulties in any of the following areas: attention, memory, reasoning, coordination, communicating, reading, writing, spelling, calculation, social competence and emotional maturation.

(c) The learning disabilities are not due to visual, hearing or motor handicaps, to mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental disadvantage, although these may occur concurrently (Alberta Education, 1997b).

The third term that requires clarification is classroom adaptation. Throughout this research, the term classroom adaptation is used to describe changes made by the teacher to the regular curriculum to accommodate students with learning difficulties. These changes refer to modifications in instruction that retain the same learning outcomes as those for the other children in the class (Winzer, 1999).

Resource room is the fourth term that requires clarification. Many of the articles in the literature review refer to pull-out resource room services. The term, resource room, refers to a room, separate from the regular classroom, where students receive part of their education for a portion of the school day. The regular classroom teacher still carries primary responsibility for program design, but works in close co-ordination with resource room personnel who may provide support in academic learning of both the core and remedial curricula, and training in social and communication skills (Winzer, 1999).

The fifth term, learning assistance classroom, refers to a classroom similar to the resource room, that is separate from the regular classroom, where students are removed from the regular classroom to receive part of their education for one or more periods a day. In this research, all of the students currently attend, or have previously attended, a learning assistance classroom, for language arts or math instruction.

This concludes the definitions. These definitions provide a frame of reference for the reader, throughout the remainder of the chapters.

Conclusion

There is little documented, empirical evidence on the effects of full inclusion on students with learning disabilities and the evidence as to whether or not inclusive programs are effective for students with learning disabilities is inconclusive (Vaughn & Schumm, 1995). Therefore, it is important to examine whether or not inclusive education is successful from the perspective of the students, parents, and school personnel. The present research will look at perspectives of students with learning disabilities, their parents, and teachers. An examination of these multiple perspectives may provide information as to how the diverse and complex aspects of inclusion are experienced by stakeholders, and help to develop a comprehensive picture of the inclusive classroom.

The following chapter provides a review of the literature pertinent to inclusive education and children with learning disabilities, as well as the literature related to student, parent, and teacher perspectives and experiences with inclusion. Chapter 3 focuses on a discussion of the methodology used in this research. This is followed by Chapter 4, that discusses the results of the research. Chapter 5 consists of a discussion of the findings and the conclusions in terms of practical applications of information presented in the research.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review is comprised of a discussion of inclusion and a review of stakeholder perspectives on inclusion. The discussion of inclusion includes a brief description of the history of inclusion related to students with learning disabilities and a summary of the debate regarding the appropriateness of inclusion for students with learning disabilities. The review of the stakeholder perspectives begins with a review of teacher and parent perspectives on inclusion. This is followed by a review of the perspectives of students with learning disabilities related to school experiences, a review of studies examining multiple perspectives, and a discussion of the perspectives of adults with learning disabilities regarding their school experiences.

Discussion of Inclusion

The setting in which students with learning disabilities have received educational services has undergone significant changes. Prior to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P. L. 94-142), students with learning disabilities were provided little or no academic and social support although they were often participants in general education classrooms (Vaughn & Schumm, 1995). In the 1970's, public school learning disabilities programs were established throughout the United States as the result of the parental and professional pressures, the increase in professional information, and the first laws requiring services for all students with disabilities including students with learning disabilities. Many students with learning disabilities were identified and provided services from special education teachers in pull-out resource room settings. Fewer students were provided services in self-contained classrooms for students with learning disabilities (Lerner, 2000; Vaughn & Klingner, 1998). During the 1980s, the majority of students with learning disabilities were placed in general education classrooms and received pull-out services in a resource room model to assist in skill acquisition (McLeskey & Pachiano, 1994).

In the last 10 years, increasing numbers of parents, professionals, and policymakers have raised concerns about the appropriateness of educating students with disabilities in settings that are separate from the general education classroom (Vaughn & Klingner, 1998). Concern has been expressed, particularly by those advocating for students with severe disabilities, regarding the appropriateness of special classes (Stainback & Stainback, 1995). As a result, the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education settings and classrooms, including students with learning disabilities, gained momentum (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1995; Padeliadu & Zigmond, 1996). More frequently, special education services are being provided to children directly within the context of general education classrooms and pull-out resource room programs for students with learning disabilities are being abandoned (Guterman, 1995).

The concept of inclusive education is based on the premise that children with special needs benefit both academically and socially in a learning environment where they are educated alongside normally achieving students. Inclusion settings are driven by the philosophy that "the diverse needs of all children (can be) accommodated to the maximum extent possible within the general education curriculum" (Salisbury, 1991, p. 147). In a very broad sense, inclusion represents a philosophy that promotes participation of children with disabilities in all aspects of school and community life (Banerji & Dailey, 1995).

There is no single inclusion approach. Rather, various approaches to inclusive schooling have been applied for students with exceptional needs. The interpretation of the term "inclusion" may vary considerably from district to district in any region of the country. In some districts, inclusion may mean placing students with mild disabilities in the regular classroom with little or no assistance from special educators. In other districts, students with severe disabilities are placed in the regular classroom for the entire school day accompanied by a full-time teaching assistant. Inclusion means different things to different educators. There may be a continuum of inclusion, even from school to school (Guetzloe, 1999).

Although the concept of educating students with learning disabilities in general education classrooms is not new, its impact on students, parents, and educators continues to be examined and debated. Strong positive support for inclusion has been voiced by professionals advocating an immediate and complete movement of children from special education to general education (The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 1992; Gartner & Lipsky, 1989; Stainback & Stainback, 1984). This position is based on the belief in the value of students with special needs being educated in regular classrooms with age-appropriate peers who can serve as role models, tutors, and potential friends (Stainback & Stainback, 1992). Baker, Wang, and Walberg (1994/1995) reported that students are less likely to be identified as "slow" by their peers and feel less stigmatized in full inclusion, and self-esteem and feelings of self-worth are believed to increase (Banergi & Dailey, 1995). In addition, students with learning disabilities in inclusive classrooms seem to be more successful at making friends even though they are still not as well liked as other students (Vaughn & Klinger, 1998). However, parents and professionals concerned with individuals with severe disabilities have demonstrated more enthusiasm for inclusion than those concerned with learning disabilities (Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, & Schattman, 1993; Laski, 1991; York, Vandercook, MacDonald, Heise-Neff, & Caughey, 1992).

However, there is concern that inclusion practices do not provide appropriate services for students with learning disabilities (Learning Disabilities Association, 1993). There is evidence that students with learning disabilities do not achieve academically in the general education classroom (Fuchs et al., 1993), do not receive individualized instruction (Zigmond & Baker, 1995), receive few or no adaptations in the classroom, and a lack of appropriate instruction may yield inadequate progress (Baker & Zigmond, 1990; McIntosh, Vaughn, Schumm, Haager, & Lee, 1993).

Other professional and parent groups have expressed support for inclusion but have made a case for the provision of a continuum of services (Council for Exceptional Children, 1993; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Kauffman, 1993; Learning Disabilities Association 1993; McKinney & Hocutt, 1988; Roberts & Mather, 1995). A number of professionals have indicated that students with learning disabilities may benefit from participation in highly structured resource programs (Carlberg & Kavale, 1980; Leinhardt & Pallay 1982; Madden & Slavin, 1983). Unfortunately, evidence regarding the efficacy of the special education resource room is limited (Carlberg & Kavale, 1980; Kauffman & Trent, 1991; Vaughn & Schumm, 1995).

The ideal of inclusion is not universally accepted and endorsed by everyone involved in the education of children with learning disabilities. There is considerable discussion and debate on the efficacy of inclusion for students with learning disabilities, and there is a lack of empirical, documented evidence to support any particular model of service delivery for students with learning disabilities (Padeliadu & Zigmond, 1996). As this debate continues, questions arise about how and whether or not inclusive education is successful from the perspectives of the student, parents, and school personnel. It is important that the satisfaction of the stakeholders in inclusive education, i.e., the teachers, parents, and students with learning disabilities who are directly affected by the move toward inclusive education. be explored. The following literature review of stakeholder perspectives provides a review of the current research on student, parent, and teacher perspectives, as well as multiple perspectives on inclusion.

Stakeholder Perspectives

The second part of this literature review is comprised of: (a) a review of teacher perspectives on inclusion, (b) an examination of the perspectives of parents of students with disabilities on inclusion, (c) a review of the perspectives of students with learning disabilities related to school experiences, (d) a review of studies examining multiple perspectives on inclusion, and (e) a discussion of the reflective perspectives of adults with learning disabilities on past school experiences and the relevance of these experiences to their current lives.

There is a body of research on the consequences of educating children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms with children without disabilities, however, to be included in this synthesis a study had to include students', parents', and/or teachers'

2

perspectives of inclusion placements. The focus is primarily on students with learning disabilities, however, perceptions of inclusion relating to non-learning disabled students were included if they were a necessary supplement to the discussion. In addition, studies were included in the discussion of inclusion that utilized the terms “integration” or “mainstreaming” if they referred to the placement of children with special needs in regular education classrooms.

Teacher Perspectives

The issue of inclusion and the views of classroom teachers have been discussed at length in the literature. The studies in this literature review include the perspectives of regular education teachers, teachers in inclusive classrooms, and special education teachers.

Several studies reported positive teacher attitudes towards inclusion. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) carried out a systematic research synthesis of 28 studies, conducted between 1958 and 1995, that focused on general education teachers’ attitudes. They found that, overall, teachers expressed positive attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities. However, the more severe the disability, the less likely teachers were to be willing to implement inclusion. The majority of teachers surveyed indicated that they did not have sufficient time, training, or resources to implement mainstreaming/inclusion successfully. Stanovich (1999) interviewed six classroom teachers, one special education teacher. and one resource teacher undergoing a transition to inclusion. The teachers identified a number of benefits to inclusion such as opportunities for students with disabilities to learn social skills and increased motivation of students with disabilities to learn. The teachers also identified the supports required for inclusion as more time, teaching materials, assistants, and administrative support. Bunch, Lupart, and Brown (1997) reported that regular classroom teachers, administrators, special education resource teachers, and even teachers in segregated classes believe that inclusion brings social and academic value to both regular and included students. The majority of these teachers also expressed concerns related to inclusion, such as workload, lack of teacher preparation, and the need for strong administrative leadership. Smith and Smith (2000) examined the perceptions of regular education early childhood teachers and found that the teachers held strong beliefs on the value of inclusion. However, the teachers expressed a need for training and more time for planning and collaboration.

Negative teacher perspectives on inclusion were also found in the literature review. Vaughn, Schumm, Jallad, Slusher, and Saumell (1996) conducted focus group interviews with 74 special education, gifted, and general education teachers not presently participating in inclusion settings. They found that teachers expressed fears related to the academic success of all students, lawsuits, workload, safety of students, and teacher roles. The barriers to success of inclusion were identified as class size, the need for additional resources, the need for parent involvement, lack of funding, additional paperwork, inadequate facilities, concerns about evaluation, and teacher willingness to teach students with disabilities. Valeo and Bunch (1998) also reported negative teacher attitudes toward inclusion. They interviewed six elementary school, regular classroom teachers including children with mild to moderate disabilities in their classrooms. The teachers expressed concerns related to time, class size, lack of expertise, and the need to deal effectively with behavioral difficulties. Cook (2001) completed a comparison of teachers' attitudes toward their included students with mild and severe disabilities. The results indicated that teacher attitudes toward included students with disabilities differed as a function of the severity of the disabilities. Teachers expressed less favorable attitudes towards teaching students with severe disabilities.

The mix of positive and negative teacher perceptions regarding inclusion may be related to the experience and training of the teachers involved in the study. Giangreco et al. (1993) interviewed general education teachers with a student with severe disabilities in their class. They found that negative initial teacher attitudes towards inclusion became more positive as the teachers witnessed incidents that benefited learners with and without disabilities. Villa, Thousand, Meyers, and Nevin (1996) found that special educators expressed more positive perspectives than general educators regarding inclusion, and general educators with experience educating students with disabilities expressed more positive perspectives than general educators without such experience on a survey. Minke, Bear, Deemer, and Griffin (1996) asked regular education teachers in traditional classrooms and regular and special education teachers who co-taught children in inclusive classrooms to complete a questionnaire on inclusion. They discovered that the regular classroom teachers teaching in traditional classrooms held the least positive perceptions of inclusion, were more likely to anticipate a negative impact from inclusion, and reported lower levels of satisfaction with teaching children with disabilities. Special educators held the most positive views of inclusion, as well as high levels of competency and self-satisfaction. Avramidis, Bayliss, and Burden (2000) found that the teachers surveyed who had experience implementing inclusive programs possessed the most positive attitudes towards inclusion. VanReusen, Shoho, and Barker (2000) surveyed the attitudes of high school teachers toward inclusion. They found that high school teachers with higher levels of training or experience held more positive attitudes towards teaching students with disabilities.

The opportunity to work in collaborative environments may also influence teacher perceptions of inclusion. Villa et al. (1996) found that special education teachers' positive perspectives were related to the degree they engaged in collaborative practices. Minke et al. (1996) reported that teachers surveyed from both special and regular education, who had the opportunity to gain experience in collaborative inclusive settings with students with mild disabilities, reported more positive views of inclusion, higher levels of personal efficacy, and higher ratings of their own competence than did teachers in traditional classes. Soodak, Podell, and Lehman (1998) found that with opportunity to collaborate, the general education teachers surveyed were more receptive to inclusion. Malone, Gallagher, and Long (2001) surveyed 148 early education general education teachers serving on student support teams in inclusive settings and found positive attitudes toward inclusion and were supportive of teamwork because it encouraged sharing of knowledge and ideas, and supported individual efforts. The teachers also described the challenges of teamwork as being scheduling and time. Austin (2002) utilized a survey to investigate the perceptions of 139 teachers in Grades 1 to 12 regarding collaboration and the concurrent effects of collaboration on learning. The teachers reported that collaboration was a positive experience that contributed positively to staff development and student learning. However, negative general education teacher perceptions of collaboration in student support teams were reported by Logan, Hansen, Nieminen, and Wright (2001). They found that support teams were not functioning as designed because teachers were unclear of the purpose of the teams, their role, and experienced anxiety and fears related to participation.

In summary, the literature review on the perspectives of classroom teachers related to inclusion revealed a mix of positive and negative teacher attitudes towards inclusion, varying willingness to teach in inclusive classrooms, and uncertainty about inclusion outcomes. There is indication that the most positive attitudes towards inclusion are held by teachers who have experience in inclusive settings, and by individuals with special skills and training. In addition, there is some evidence that individuals with experience in inclusive settings that involve working with other education professionals in a collaborative consultation or co-teaching setting, have the most positive views of inclusion. The literature also indicated that the majority of teachers irrespective of background and teaching situation believe that successful inclusion requires adequate support and assistance. In many of the studies, teachers consistently reported a need for greater time, resources, and supports.

After reviewing the literature on teacher perspectives regarding inclusion several gaps in the literature become apparent. First, there is very little literature examining teacher perspectives relative to teaching students with learning disabilities. Second, few studies in the literature have examined the perspectives of teachers teaching in inclusive settings where collaboration to meet the needs of students with disabilities is in place. Third, more information is needed concerning how teachers actually teach students with learning disabilities in regular education classes.

Parent Perspectives

There are a limited number of studies focused on the perspectives of parents of children with learning disabilities. Therefore this literature review also includes the perspectives of parents of children with moderate or severe disabilities placed in inclusive school settings.

Parent perspectives – students with moderate and severe disabilities. Several studies have examined parental perspectives related to the educational placement of children with moderate and severe disabilities. Lowenbraun, Madge, and Affleck (1990) surveyed parents of children with a variety of mild and moderate disabilities in elementary schools. They reported that, the parents were satisfied with the regular classroom and resource room placements in terms of their child's academic progress. The parents indicated that the inclusion model was effective in enhancing their children's self-esteem and social development.

Ryndak, Downing, Jacqueline, and Morrison (1995) conducted semi structured interviews with the parents of 13 children with moderate or severe disabilities placed in inclusive school settings. The parent comments were positive regarding the support of the general education teachers, modifications to the classroom curriculum and instructional activities, and peer tutoring. Negative parent perspectives were expressed regarding the district's lack of understanding of their child and frustration regarding the process used to determine their child's educational setting.

Palmer, Borthwick-Duffy, and Widaman (1998) surveyed parents of children with severe disabilities and reported that, the parents expressed positive perspectives regarding the benefits, acceptance, and treatment of their child resulting from the inclusive practices. However, the parents also expressed negative perspectives regarding the impact of inclusion on opportunities for their child to have a specialized curriculum and individualized attention.

Grove and Fisher (1999) interviewed 12 parents of children with severe disabilities and found that, during the transition into inclusion placements, parents worked to gain access to the general classroom and to ensure the success of their children in general education classrooms. The majority of the parents believed that their children benefited substantially from inclusive education, but identified problems such as school settings where staff members were unprepared for inclusion, and a system that tolerated inclusive education, but did little to embrace it. Parents reported that they dealt with the problem by becoming actively involved in the school, educating others about inclusive education practices, and coordinating the work of service providers.

Lovitt and Cushing (1999) interviewed parents of high school youth with a variety of disabilities and reported that, although majority of the parents supported the policy of placing students with special needs in general education classes, many had reservations concerning the inclusion of their son or daughter. A number of parents believed that their child was doing quite well in the inclusive setting, others expressed concerns regarding their child's performance. The level of parent involvement with the school and the IEP process varied, with some parents providing support, others showing dissatisfaction with the process, and still others claiming to be uninformed. Many of the parents believed that the IEP document lacked individualization, some parents said they thought that the grading policy for their children was the same as that for general education students, and other parents believed that the grades were linked to the IEP objectives.

Duhaney and Salend (2000) reviewed 17 studies in the literature with respect to the perceptions and experiences of parents of children with a range of disabilities, and parents of children without disabilities, regarding inclusive educational programs. The findings of the studies cited indicated mixed, but generally positive, perceptions of parents toward inclusive educational placements. The parents reported that they thought that inclusion promotes the acceptance of children by peers, helps children develop socially, emotionally, and academically, and enhances self image. However, the parents expressed concerns with availability of qualified personnel, loss of special education services, and excessive demands on parent time.

Soodak and Erwin (2000) interviewed 10 parents of children with severe handicaps participating in an early childhood setting. They found when parents were not involved in the IPP process and were required merely to sign the IPP, the parents perceived that they were not important. If parents were provided with an opportunity to participate in the decision making they felt respected. The parents also indicated that they were satisfied with collaborative roles if there was trust and ongoing informal communication. Several of the parents reported early adverse experiences with schools that resulted in negative attitudes towards education personnel.

Palmer, Fuller, Arora, and Nelson (2001) surveyed 149 parents of children with severe disabilities regarding their perspective on inclusion. They found the parents believed that children with disabilities would learn more in a general education classroom. However, a number of the parents had concerns as to whether or not the general education program would be suitable for their child. The parents indicated concerns that their child's needs might not be met, wondered how the child would be treated, and worried that their child might be neglected.

Parent perspectives – students with learning disabilities. Several studies have examined the perspectives of parents of students with learning disabilities. Gibb et al. (1997) interviewed the parents of students with learning disabilities at the conclusion of the first year of a collaborative Grade 8 junior high inclusion program. The parents reported that the students experienced increased self-esteem and socialized more with other students. They also reported that students enjoyed school more than in the past and demonstrated greater willingness to participate. The students also experienced more academic success.

Waggoner and Wilgosh (1990) shared the experiences and concerns of parents in eight families regarding their involvement with the school, their school experiences, and their sources of support. The parents interviewed consistently reported a need to be involved in the educational experience of their child, as well as a need for instruction in the home. The parents reported that the need to be continually involved with the school required commitment, frustration, perseverance, and time. Each family reported positive experiences in their relationship with the school, however seven of the eight families also described frustrating negative experiences. The parents reported social concerns related to their child's limited exposure to peers and concerns about their child's future.

Green and Shinn (1994) interviewed parents of elementary school children with learning disabilities who attended the resource room for reading. The parents' responses revealed that they were very satisfied with the resource room because of the individual attention children received, the positive characteristics of the teachers, and the perceived increased self-esteem of their children. They also expressed a reluctance to have their children reintegrated into the general education classroom for reading instruction.

Myles and Simpson (1990) conducted a questionnaire with 129 parents of elementary age children with learning disabilities regarding classroom modifications. They reported that, overall, the parents of children with learning disabilities supported the placement of their children full–time in the regular classroom, contingent upon availability and implementation of classroom adaptations. The parents preferred modifications that yield direct benefits to their children such as reducing class size, availability of paraprofessionals, consultation between teachers and other professionals, and the availability of support personnel.

Overall, parents of children with disabilities including those with learning disabilities expressed a variety of opinions regarding the education of their children in inclusive school environments. Many parents reported positive views of and experiences with inclusion, although apprehension has been expressed regarding the impact of inclusion. Many parents were found to have strong ideas as to the classroom accommodations and adaptations they preferred and had positive perspectives of inclusive settings if these accommodations and adaptations were in place. Many parents indicated a need to collaborative with the school, and expressed positive and negative experiences interacting with teachers.

After reviewing the literature on parent perspectives on inclusion, several gaps in the literature became apparent. First, there are a limited number of studies that focus on the perspectives of parents of children with disabilities regarding inclusion, and even fewer that focus on the perspectives of parents of children with learning disabilities. Parents of children with learning disabilities are likely to have different perspectives than parents of children with more severe disabilities. Parents can provide valuable information regarding the impact of inclusion on their child's social, emotional, and academic development, and can help to identify the factors that contribute to and/ or hinder parents' support of inclusion. Therefore it is necessary for further research to examine the perspectives of students with learning disabilities in inclusive settings and the perspectives of their teachers, as well as perspectives of the parents.

Student Perspectives

A number of studies have focused on the perceptions of students with learning disabilities in inclusive classrooms regarding their school experiences. The studies in this literature review focus on the perspectives of students regarding their school placement, classroom adaptations, and homework.

School placement. A number of studies reported positive student perspectives on pull-out placements in resource room settings. Vaughn and Bos (1987) conducted a survey with and interviewed 20 students with learning disabilities and 126 students without disabilities in Grades 1 to 6. They reported that, 30% of the primary students with learning disabilities and 70% of the intermediate students with disabilities selected the resource room as the room in which they would most like to spend time outside of the regular classroom. They also found few differences between students with learning disabilities and students without disabilities in this preference. However, several students with learning disabilities reported missing instruction in the regular classroom when they attended the resource room.

Jenkins and Heinen (1989) surveyed special, remedial and regular education students in Grades 2, 4, and 5 that were currently receiving pull out, in-class, or integrated special education services. They found student preferences for pull-out resource room or in-class support were influenced by the type of program they were currently in and their grade level. The majority of students placed in pull-out resource room situations preferred pull-out services. Students receiving in-class services were divided between their preference for in-class and pull-out services. Many of the older students preferred the pull-out model as they perceived it to be less embarrassing, and they felt that they received more help.

Padeliadu and Zigmond (1996) conducted structured interviews with elementary students with learning disabilities. They found that, the students liked attending the resource room because they "got extra help," engaged in "fun" activities, and it was quieter than the regular education classroom. A number of students reported concerns that they missed activities in their regular education classroom when they went to special education.

Vaughn and Klinger (1998) examined eight studies that interviewed and surveyed students with learning disabilities regarding their placement preferences. They found that, overall students preferred to receive specialized instruction outside of the regular classroom, liked the resource room, but were not sure why they were placed in the resource room. These students also reported that they liked the inclusion classroom because it was better for making friends, and they valued the support they received in the regular education classroom.

Klingner, Vaughn, Schumm, Cohen, and Forgan (1998) interviewed 32 students with and without learning disabilities in Grades 4, 5, and 6. The students reported positive perspectives regarding a collaborative inclusive classroom. Many of the students with learning disabilities felt that inclusion helped them make friends. The students also indicated that they preferred working with other students in small groups and thought work was more difficult in the regular education classroom. However, some of the students preferred the pull-out resource room model because they could concentrate better, and they could get help. The student without learning disabilities reported that students with learning disabilities learned more in the general education class because they could get help with the same assignments. However, the students without learning disabilities indicated that they liked the pull-out resource room model because their class was not as noisy when some students left, so they could concentrate better.

Several studies reported student stigma associated with attendance in resource rooms. Whinnery, King, Evans, and Gable (1995) surveyed the perceptions of students with learning disabilities in inclusion versus pull-out resource room placements in Grades 2 through 5. The students reported that they felt accepted in inclusion settings, and several students indicated that they did not like to be singled out and removed out of the regular classroom. Guterman (1995) interviewed nine high school students with learning disabilities and found that students reported stigma related to attendance in the resource room. The majority of the students felt that resource room attendance had not helped them academically. Shoho, Katims, and Wilks (1997) found that students with learning disabilities in high school, who received academic support outside of the classroom daily in resource room settings, reported significantly higher levels of alienation than those students who were fully included in the regular classroom.

No conclusive statements can be made regarding the perspective of students with learning disabilities regarding their educational placements. Many students reported positive experiences in inclusive settings, while others indicated that they preferred to receive help in pull-out resource room settings. Concerns have been reported regarding embarrassment and stigmatization related to attendance in the resource room, particularly with older students; however, other students did not feel stigmatized at all. Several studies reported student concerns with missing work when they were out of the regular classroom. In several studies, inclusive settings were viewed by students to support friendships, and several studies found a preference by students for group work in the regular classroom.

Classroom adaptations. Several studies focus on the perceptions of students with learning disabilities in relationship to classroom adaptations or specific teaching strategies in the inclusive classroom. Vaughn, Schumm, Niarhos, and Daugherty (1993) found secondary students rated teacher who made adaptations in the classroom higher than the teacher who did not make adaptations. However, several students preferred that no adaptations be made to tests, homework, and textbooks. In addition, students who preferred adaptations demonstrated significantly higher reading and math achievement scores than did students who did not prefer adaptations. Vaughn, Schumm, and Kouzekanani (1993) found the majority of students with learning disabilities, low achieving students, average students, and high average students in elementary, middle, and secondary school rated the teacher who made adaptations in the classroom higher than the teacher who did not. Several students with learning disabilities at the middle school level preferred teachers who made no classroom adaptations because they would not be singled out as needing assistance. Fulk and Smith (1995), on a yes or no questionnaire, reported students in Grades 1 to 6 responded very positively regarding classroom adaptations. Students in older grades almost unanimously accepted and preferred the teachers' use of classroom accommodations, despite the fact that their teachers were less likely to use adaptations.

Vaughn, Schumm, Klingner, and Saumell (1995) examined middle and high school students' views of instructional practices in individual interviews. The students included low average, average, and high average students, as well as students with learning disabilities and second language students. All the students commented that being taught learning strategies made learning more effective for them. The majority of students thought all students should have the same tests and homework, however almost all felt that teachers should adapt lessons so that everyone could understand. They found that a large percentage of the students with learning disabilities preferred to work in pairs and stated a preference for peer tutoring.

Bursuck, Munk, and Olson (1999) surveyed and interviewed low average, average, above average students, and students with learning disabilities in Grades 9 through 12. They found that no grading adaptation was viewed by a majority of students without disabilities as fair. Students with learning disabilities had mixed responses regarding the fairness of grading adaptations. Although there was a lack of unanimity, students with learning disabilities believed that there is a need to evaluate some students using an adjusted standard. Some students indicated a desire for alternatives for traditional grades, whereas others believed that they should be treated the same as everyone else.

There have been limited attempts in the literature to measure students' attitudes regarding instructional adaptations in the inclusive classroom. This is unfortunate given that the success of inclusion may depend on teachers making adaptations that are helpful to students. In the studies examined in this literature review, students were able to identify strategies that work for them in the classroom, as well as individual learning preferences. In some studies, modifications to classroom materials and assignments were deemed desirable, although this was not universal. Some students indicated a preference for adaptations, others did not. These differences in preferences may be individual or may be related to grade level. In some studies there were indications that students with learning disabilities enjoyed group work.

Homework. Two studies examined student perceptions regarding homework. Sawyer, Nelson, Jayanthi, Bursuck, and Epstein (1996) interviewed 10 high school students with learning disabilities and reported that, the students found homework to be a slow, difficult, and frustrating process. The students identified a number of challenges with homework completion including: difficulties with understanding homework, forgetting instructions, lack of interest in homework, tiredness, frustration, and anger. The students also indicated that it is helpful when teachers assign homework earlier in the class, and when additional assistance or explanation is provided.

Nelson, Epstein, Bursuck, Jayanthi, and Sawyer (1998) examined the homework preferences of 211 middle school students, including 17 students with high incidence disabilities. Responses to a questionnaire indicated that the students preferred assignments that could be finished at school, and the opportunity to participate in small group activities that facilitate the sharing and discussion of ideas. The least preferred adaptations included changes made to assignments given to the rest of the class, and requiring the use of an assignment notebook.

Despite the importance of student perceptions of homework adaptations, the research related to these perceptions is very limited. The results of the two studies indicate that students distinguish among types of homework adaptations, indicating preferences for some adaptations and disliking others. Students are also able to identify particular adaptations that work for them, pointing out what makes homework difficult and factors that helped them complete their homework.

After reviewing the literature on the perceptions of students with learning disabilities regarding their school work it is apparent that there is a need for further research in this area. First, there is very little research regarding how students with learning disabilities perceive, and are affected in, inclusive classrooms. The way students perceive placement, their perceptions of social information from classroom interactions, the modifications that they find desirable, are important pieces of information in decision-making in terms of service delivery options, the scheduling of services, classroom management, and adaptations in the inclusive classroom. Second, there is very little research regarding student perspectives on homework. It is important to listen to student perspectives and modify homework practices in ways that optimize positive experiences for students. Third, further research is need to identify potential factors that could contribute to classroom and homework success by interviewing students, their parents and teachers, focusing directly on strategies that students, parents, and teachers employ. A myriad of dynamics between students, teachers, and parents may play an important role in classroom and homework success. Too few data are available to specify what parents, students, and teachers, must do and how they should do it.

Multiple Perspectives

Very few studies have focused on the perspectives of multiple participants in the inclusive classroom setting. This review begins with a discussion of the studies focusing on the perceptions of teachers and students, followed by studies reporting the perceptions of students and parents, and studies of parents and teacher perceptions. The discussion is concluded with a review of multiple perspective studies that examine the perceptions of students, teachers, and parents.

Teacher and student perspectives. Three studies are reported here that examine and compare the perceptions of teachers and students participating in inclusive classrooms. McLeod, Kolb, and Lister (1994) compared high school teachers' and students' perceptions of social skills, school skills, and high school success using a 53 item questionnaire. The results indicated that the perceptions of the regular education teachers differed significantly from the students with learning disabilities regarding the social and school skills that are important for success in the regular classroom. The teachers rated the skills of exhibiting appropriate work habits, respecting others, and following school rules as being more important than did the students with learning disabilities. The students with learning disabilities rated skills such as making friends as more important than did teachers.

Pugach and Wesson (1995) interviewed three general education teachers and 18 students with and without learning disabilities, in two fifth-grade classes, after an entire year of full integration. The results indicated that the students felt good about themselves, their teachers, and their peers, and many of them described school as being "fun." The majority of the students believed they were doing better academically than they had before, even though the work was perceived to be harder. The teachers reported that they were meeting the needs of all of the students.

Pavri and Monda-Amaya (2001) examined the perspectives of students and educators in Grades 3 to 5 regarding the social support in inclusive schools. They found the majority of students with learning disabilities felt like they were part of a social network, although many reported socially related loneliness. The teachers reported that they play a role the social development of students and saw themselves as facilitators of social relations. The teachers' choices for interventions to support students differed from the students' preferences of social intervention strategies.

Student and parent perceptions. Two articles are reviewed here that compare the perceptions of students with learning disabilities with those of their parents. McLoughlin, Clark, Mauck, and Petrosko (1987) found there were many significant differences in the perceptions of the parents of adolescents with learning disabilities and the adolescents themselves on a questionnaire. The parents tended to rate their adolescents' level of performance as lower than the adolescents themselves did and perceived their children's learning disabilities as sources of great concern. The parents' expressed greater concern about their children's friendships and social circle. The adolescents with learning disabilities perceived themselves as being capable of solving their own problems, while their parents indicated that the adolescents relied on others for assistance. Gerber and Popp (1999) utilized focus group interviews to examine the perspectives of students with and without learning disabilities and their parents regarding a collaborative, inclusive teaching model at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The research found that the students with learning disabilities liked the collaborative model and felt that it enabled them to get better grades and receive more help. The parents of the students with learning disabilities felt that collaborative teaching had a positive impact on their children and helped to foster self-esteem.

Teacher and parent perceptions. Two studies are reported here that examine and compare the perceptions of teachers and the parents of students with learning disabilities participating in inclusive classrooms. Bennett, Deluca, and Bruns (1997) examined the perspectives of teachers, and parents of students with a variety of disabilities enrolled in preschool and elementary schools. The parents surveyed reported a high degree of involvement, strong opinions about educating their children in inclusive settings, and positive attitudes toward inclusion. The parents felt that their children benefited from inclusion with increases in social, academic, and developmental skills. The attitudes of the teachers were less positive and focused on issues related to resources, curricular adaptations, and supports. Both parents and teachers indicated a need for a commitment from everyone involved.

Seery, Davis, and Johnson (2000) questioned teachers and parents of children with and without disabilities in telephone interviews regarding their hopes and concerns about inclusion at the beginning and the end of a preschool year. Both groups demonstrated agreement about the benefits and concerns related to inclusion, and concern about the preparation of general educators to meet the needs of children with disabilities. There were differences in the opinions regarding the future of inclusion. The parents and staff supported the inclusion program and that its continuation. However, the staff reported a need for appropriate philosophy, appropriate classroom strategies, services, curriculum, and collaboration if inclusion was to continue.

Student, parent, and teacher perspectives. The final area of multiple perspectives to be examined in this literature review is that of studies focusing on the perspectives of students with learning disabilities, the parents of the students, and the regular and/or the student's special education teacher.

Lehmann, Bassett, and Sands (1999) explored the perspectives of high school students' with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities, their parents, and their teachers regarding participation in transition-related activities through the use of interviews and observations. Although the teachers and the parents agreed on the need for students to possess some level of self-determination, the need for communication, and the need for administrative support, the results of this study indicated a lack of agreement between parents, teachers, and students as to what transition activities should entail. Teacher comments were related to teaching activities such as teaching about career interests and job-seeking skills. The parents focused on teaching independent living skills, working on friendships, finding jobs, and communicating with the schools. The students appeared to have little knowledge or interest in working on the transition from school to work, appeared ambivalent about the future, and deferred to others.

Lombardi, Nuzzo, Kennedy, and Foshay (1994) used a questionnaire to examine the perceptions of parents, regular education and special education teachers, and regular and special education students with learning disabilities and behavior disorders regarding a move to an elementary inclusion program. The results indicated that the perceptions of teachers and parents of regular and special needs students were very positive regarding inclusive education. However, the teachers in the regular classrooms were less sure of the value of including students with severe special needs in regular classrooms than were the parents, and the teachers were not certain if they would have sufficient time. The regular and special education students were supportive of the move in the school to inclusion and the regular students disagreed that their education would be compromised by having students with special needs in their class. Following one year of the program at the school, half of the teachers thought discipline problems had decreased and most thought the classroom disruptions were caused by regular students, not students with special needs. Sixty-eight percent of the teachers felt that the intervention strategies suggested by the special educators had a positive effect. No data from the parents or students following one year of the program were reported.

Wilczenski et al. (1997) examined the meaning of inclusion to different stakeholder groups and implications for the identification of effective educational practices. Twenty individuals were interviewed, including regular education teachers, special education teachers, teacher aides, parents, a student, school psychologists, and a pediatrician. The individuals interviewed were asked to focus on a child who had been successfully included. They found that parents felt that the inclusive classroom was important for social development. The student focused on the benefits of peer relationships, although he also reported that sometimes his peers were "embarrassed" to know him. The teachers and other educational professionals felt that teacher attitude was a key factor and that teachers needed to volunteer to teach students with special needs. Relationships among school personnel were also seen as critical for success.

Ritter, Michel, and Irby (1999) examined the perceptions of 5 middle school students, their parents, and teachers regarding their recent move from special education to an inclusive setting. The parents and students agreed that the students were more confident in the inclusive setting and enjoyed improved self esteem and camaraderie. This was thought to be the result of higher expectations, equality in the regular classroom and students being able to stay in class with their friends. The teachers reported an increase in student confidence in the inclusive setting and improved academic achievement.

The final study examined the perspectives of students with learning disabilities, along with their parents and teachers. Zigmond and Baker (Baker, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c; Zigmond, 1995a, 1995b) used observations, interviews, and document analysis to describe the educational experiences of students with learning disabilities attending Grade 2 and 5 classrooms in five different states. The authors used observations, document analysis and interviews to gather data. They concluded that all students with learning disabilities were fully integrated in the classroom curriculum, had access to the same learning opportunities as students who were not disabled, and had access to a system of supports and services usually provided by a special education teacher. However, there was little evidence in these case studies of more intensive instruction or special education, or assessment and educational plans specifically developed for the special child with learning disabilities. The authors concluded that the mainstream classrooms examined failed to provide appropriate special education opportunities for the students involved (Zigmond & Baker, 1995).

After examining the literature in the area of multiple stakeholder perspectives a numbers of gaps in the literature have become apparent. First, there have been very few studies in the literature to examine multiple stakeholder perspectives in inclusive settings. Second, the majority of the studies found simply reported the perspectives of each of the stakeholder groups with no comparison of issues across groups. Only three of the studies in the literature review reported the perspectives of each of the stakeholder groups and made some comparisons across stakeholder groups on some issues. There were limited attempts in the studies to compare the perspective of each of the members of the stakeholder triad. Further research is need to examine the perspectives of each of the stakeholders to identify the similarities and the differences in perceptions and the possible reasons for those differences. A great deal of information regarding the experiences of each of the stakeholder groups could have been garnered if these perceptions had been examined.

Adult Perspectives

Finally, this review includes a discussion of the reflective perspectives of adults with learning disabilities on past school experiences, and the relevance of these experiences to their current lives. The inclusive classroom experiences of students with learning disabilities will affect who they are and become in the future. There is very little data on adult retrospective perspectives of the impact of schooling experiences. Reiff, Gerber, and Ginsberg, (1997), in a qualitative reflective study with 71 adults with learning disabilities, found many individuals' memories of learning disabilities are strongly linked to school experiences. Many of the individuals interviewed hated school, and thought of school as torture, or a survival experience. Common themes included: frustration in the classroom, poor self-esteem, fear and terror at not being able to complete tasks, rejection by peers, and pretending that everything was all right.

Druck (1994), a successful adult with a learning disability, reflected that the elementary and junior high school years were torturous and that he thought that he was stupid. Druck stated that he learned to "fake it" at school, and that his schooling experiences had a definite negative impact on his adult years.

In summary, painful experiences in school may have long-lasting consequences. However, many innovations and changes in educational practice have occurred since the adult subjects attended school. It is possible that the students in inclusive classrooms have a different experience in school environments where non-disabled peers, teachers, educational professionals, and parents work together to meet the needs of students with learning difficulties. It is evident that the school experience and the student's perspective of the experience is important for the future success of the student.

Conclusion

Today, children with learning disabilities are primarily included in regular classrooms. Although there is continued debate as to the efficacy of inclusion for students with learning disabilities and questions as to the success from the perspectives of the student, parents, and regular education teacher, the perspectives of the stakeholders have been explored in a limited way in the literature. Teacher perspectives on inclusive education were the most widely reported and include a mix of positive and negative teacher attitudes towards inclusion, and areas of teacher concern. Limited data on the perspectives of parents of children with learning disabilities were available in the literature. The parents shared both positive and negative experiences with and support for inclusion. Studies focusing on student perspectives on inclusive education revealed that students with learning disabilities identified: mixed preferences for the educational setting they are placed in, group work as an important learning factor, the inclusive classroom as a good place for making friends, and the importance of classroom and grading accommodations. The literature review on the reflective perspectives of adults with learning disabilities on past school experiences identified the impact of early school experiences in adulthood. Very few studies in the literature examined multiple stakeholder perspectives in inclusive settings. However, few studies attempted to systematically examine and compare the perspectives of the student with learning disabilities, the parent of the student, and the regular education teacher of the student regarding specific aspects of the inclusive education experience. Inclusive classrooms are very complex environments that involve the participation of all of the key stakeholders to be successful. Therefore it becomes imperative that research be conducted to determine how students with learning disabilities, their parents, and teachers experience inclusion and look at the possible differences and similarities in the perspectives. This study examined five case studies focussed on the perspectives of students with learning disabilities, their parents, and teachers in inclusive settings.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

Introduction

This chapter is comprised of five sections. The first section of the chapter outlines the conceptual framework for the research including: a) the research questions; b) a discussion of the qualitative approach; and c) a review of the case study method that provides the framework for this research. The second section of this chapter examines the methodology employed. It will provide an overview of the participants, the interviews, and the field notes. The third section of the chapter focuses on data analysis, and the fourth section deals with the issues of credibility, transferability and dependability. The final section of this chapter provides information on how ethical considerations were dealt with.

Description of the Method

In light of the discoveries in the literature review, a number of research questions were explored in this research. The research questions formed the beginnings of the inquiry. The general research question was as follows:

> How do students with learning disabilities, their parents, and teachers experience inclusion?

Other related research questions that evolved from the literature review include:

> Are there differences in the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers in the inclusive classroom?
>
> What are the various techniques used to meet the needs of the student and which techniques are perceived to be effective by the students, parents, and teachers?

Given the purpose of the present research and the initial questions posed, it was necessary to use a method that incorporates the existential experience of the participants, their actions, thoughts, feelings, and perspectives – as a major focus for investigation and interpretation. Therefore, a qualitative approach to research design and analysis was employed. Several features that characterize qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) are present in this study.

1. The present study sampled the perspectives of the subjects in the natural setting. In-depth interviews occurred in the school and within the context of the students' homes. The study was concerned with context, as stakeholder perspectives can best be understood in the actual settings in which they occur.
2. This method took into account each individual's participation in the real world context of inclusion using the respondent's oral descriptions as raw data. The data collected in this study are descriptive and consist of interview transcripts and fieldnotes from the interviews. The data were analyzed with all of their richness as closely as possible to the form in which they were recorded and transcribed. Direct quotations are utilized to capture the individual's personal perspectives and experiences. Through analysis, the experience of inclusion became more clearly understood. The interviews captured real life data and provided a qualitative measure of inclusion outcomes.
3. This study is concerned with process. The focus of the investigation is on how students, parents, and teachers perceive and react to what happens in the inclusive classroom; the meanings that students, parents, and teachers give to

events; how student, parent, and teacher attitudes are translated into actions; how students, parents, and teachers are affected by the events in the inclusive classroom; and how classroom adaptations and modifications are interpreted.

4. The data were analyzed inductively. The questions and conclusions were reached from the bottom up. Immersion in the details and specifics of the data assisted in the discovery of important categories, dimensions, and interrelationships. The perspectives that are reported came directly from the informants themselves with a focus on individuals and their experiences.
5. This study is concerned with how the various stakeholders in the inclusive education classroom perceive their situation. It is concerned with what they are thinking, why they think what they do, as well as with their assumptions, motives, reasons, goals, and values. The goal is to capture the thinking of the participants from the participants' perspective.

The present research can be seen as a case study. The case, as defined by Merriam (1998), is a thing or entity around which there are boundaries. The case could be a student, a teacher, a principal, or a school; however, the phenomenon must be bounded. The present inquiry is bounded. The boundaries include: 1) the setting was limited to elementary inclusive classrooms, 2) the number of individuals was limited to five students with learning disabilities who receive their education in inclusive settings, as well as their teachers and parents, who are the other key stakeholders, 3) the time was limited to a 5 month period from February 2000 to June 2000, and 4) the data gathering method was limited to interviews.

The case study can also be further defined by three characteristics. The case study is particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic (Merriam, 1998). The case study is particularistic in that it focuses on a particular situation, event, program or phenomenon. The end product of a case study is descriptive and provides a rich description of the phenomenon. The present inquiry attempts to illustrate the complexities of the inclusive classroom experience, present various perspectives on the inclusive experience, as well as identify differences in perspectives and how they may influence the classroom. The case study is also heuristic and may add to knowledge and generate understanding.

As the present study will contain more than a single case it can be seen as a multiple-case design. The multiple-case study follows a replication logic. Multiple cases are included within the same study in anticipation that a replication may be found. If replication is indeed found across the cases, more confidence can be placed in the overall results (Yin,1993).

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers in inclusive education settings, and focused on a specific set of experiences for a small number of students. In addition, as mentioned in the previous section, a multiple-case study design was chosen, following a replication logic. The five cases included within the same study are expected to yield similar results. If in fact these replications are found there will be more confidence in the overall results.

Five triads of students, parents, and teachers were selected for the study on the basis of feasibility and access. The participants were selected on the basis of which schools in the school division were willing to participate in the study, and the students in those schools who met the criteria of having a learning disability, who were enrolled in an inclusive classroom as defined in Chapter 1 of this study. Of the five students, three of the selected students attended one school, and two students attend other schools. Participants for the study were students in a single suburban/rural school district and were enrolled in Grade 5 or 6. The school district was chosen due to the geographical proximity to the university and the researcher. Students in Grades 5 and 6 were chosen as it was thought that students at this level would be able to articulate their inclusive classroom experiences. The selection process began with a member of the central office staff contacting individual schools and obtaining consent from principals for the research to take place in their respective schools. The central office staff member then contacted the researcher and provided the researcher with the names of two schools. The initial intent of the research was to select two triads from each of two schools. Two triads were selected and interviewed at one school, however only one triad was available at the second school. The central office staff were contacted and another school location was asked for. At that point the researcher decided to include a third triad from the first school. Once the interviewing with this triad was completed the central office staff contacted the researcher with the name of a third school. This third school had one possible triad. Although the researcher had already completed interviews with four triads as originally outlined in the original research proposal, it was decided to include the additional triad in the research. It was thought that including the perspectives of a triad from a third school would help to either replicate the findings from the other schools, or provide a contrasting set of experiences.

The researcher contacted each of the principals involved and was referred to another contact in the school. The contact person in each school was provided with information about the purpose and structure of the study and the contact person identified possible triads from the school records. At one school, a number of possible triads were identified, at each of the other two schools, only one triad was identified. The contact person at each school contacted the prospective students, parents, and teachers, briefly described the research, and obtained verbal permission for the researcher to contact the possible participants directly. The researcher then contacted each student, parent, and teacher to set up meetings. The purpose of this initial meeting was to: 1) discuss the purpose of the research and ask for involvement; 2) discuss the issue of confidentiality; and 3) confirm interest in participating in the study. These meetings were held in the respective schools, and at the homes of the parents. All of the students, parents, and teachers contacted were interested in participating and signed the consent forms (Appendices A, B, and C).

In-depth interviewing was the primary method of data collection. For each triad, an in-depth interview was conducted with the student, the parent who has the most contact with the school environment, and the regular inclusive classroom teacher. The teachers were interviewed in a quiet private location in the school and the interviews were approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour in duration. The parents were interviewed in the home or other location of their choosing. The parent interviews were approximately 1 hour in duration. The students were interviewed during school hours in a quiet private location, in sessions not longer 45 minutes to minimize the effect on the students' learning time at school.

Interviews are an important data collection tool that assist the researcher to understand the way people think about their world. For the purposes of this study, interview guides composed of a number of open-ended questions were employed, listing the issues that were to be explored. The use of open-ended questions in the interview permitted the researcher to explore the world as seen by the respondents. The open-ended questions also provided a framework within which the subjects could respond to represent accurately and thoroughly their points of view. The interview guide helped to ensure that the same basic information was obtained from all subjects by covering the same material, and made the interviewing more systematic and comprehensive. The interviewer was still free to explore, probe, ask questions, and build a conversation, however the focus on particular subjects was predetermined. Separate, but similar guides were developed for the students, parents, and teachers (Appendices D, E, and F).

Prior to commencing the formal interview process, rapport was established with each participant. This was accomplished during the initial meeting, when the purpose of the research was explained and consent obtained. For the parents and teachers, the rapport was quickly established prior to starting the interview. For students, additional meeting times were set up to establish rapport, where the researcher and students had informal conversations in the classroom or in a separate quiet area.

Each interview was tape recorded with the participant's approval and transcribed by a typist immediately after the interview. The researcher completed an initial data review immediately while the data were fresh. Then the transcript and initial data analysis were shared with the participants and further information gathered from the participants regarding the accuracy of the analysis obtained.

Fieldnotes were also utilized in the data collection process. Noes were taken by the interviewer during the interview that contained the essentials of the interviewee's answers and information about the proceeding of the interview. The fieldnotes were a written account of what the interviewer heard, saw, experienced and thought during the course of collecting and reflecting on the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Information from the fieldnotes were incorporated into the presentation of the research findings.

Data Analysis

This study utilized a number of strategies to organize and analyze the data. As the first step in analysis of the data the researcher used self examination to become aware of personal bias and, to the degree that is possible, eliminate personal involvement with the subject material.

The second step of the process involved reduction of the data. The data were examined carefully, defined, and analyzed. Key phrases and statements that related to the phenomenon were identified and the meanings of these phrases and statements interpreted. These meanings were examined and statements regarding each participants perspectives were developed. These statements were summarized and an initial summary of each case study were reviewed with the participants and feedback obtained and incorporated into the data. However, one parent and one teacher declined second meetings to review the summaries due to personal reasons or time commitments.

Two strategic ways researchers can reach new meanings when working with case studies were utilized to understand the complexities of each case (Stake, 1995). This study relied on direct interpretation of the data, which involved looking at each instance, trying to pull it apart and put it back together meaningfully. The second strategy was the thematic coding or categorization of the data – the search for patterns.

This involved looking at each passage again, and again, reflecting, triangulation, and being skeptical of the obvious. Every single passage of the text was analyzed in detail. The data was coded using pre-established codes. The thematic codes were initially established based on the themes central to the questions in the interview guides. The resulting system of categories was used to analyze each of the cases. In addition the data in the cases were also analyzed to look for new codes that were not previously included. The thematic structure that was developed served as a basis for comparing cases and groups and permitted a constant comparison of the cases. This procedure allowed group comparisons beyond the single case so that the validity and comparability of the interpretations was increased. However, the procedure remained sensitive and open to the specific contents of each individual case with regard to the issue under study.

The data analysis occurred within the framework of a case study analysis. As the purpose of the case study analysis is to gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each case of interest, each case analysis included all the interview data and field notes of the impressions gathered during the interview process (Patton, 1990). The data were organized into a comprehensive description that included all the major information that was used in the case analysis and case study. The data were edited, parts fitted together, and organized topically. Each individual case study analysis described below began with a description of each student, parent and teacher perspective followed by the identification of the similarities and differences between each of the stakeholders. Finally, the case studies were integrated across cases, exploring the common threads and the differences between the students, between the parents, and between the teachers.

Credibility, Transferability, Dependability

A number of writers (e.g. Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Stainback & Stainback, 1988) have outlined criteria for judging the quality of qualitative research that parallel the criteria for judging positivist, quantitative research. Guba and Lincoln (1989) equated *credibility* with internal validity, *dependability* with reliability, and *transferability* with external validity. In this section the credibility, transferability, and dependability of the present research are discussed.

Credibility is an important issue in qualitative research. Patton (1990) identified several areas that need to be addressed to demonstrate the credibility of a study. First, the study needs to utilize rigorous techniques and methods of data collection. To this end, this study reports the details of data collection and the process of analysis. Rival or competing themes and explanations are described, as well as the process of testing these themes. This lends credibility to the research. The research also documents negative cases and instances that do not fit patterns, openly dealing with the complexities of the data and the dilemmas that arise.

Mertens and McLaughlin (1995) discuss a number of additional research strategies that can be used to enhance credibility. The research should engage in prolonged and substantial engagement. There are no rules that govern how long a researcher should stay at a site. However, it is indicated that if the researcher has confidence that the themes and examples are repeating instead of extending, it may be time to leave the field. The researcher for this study continued the interview process with each subject until it was felt that all avenues had been explored and answers to questions and stories began to repeat themselves.

A second strategy identified by Mertens and McLaughlin (1995) involves member checks. Member checks require the researcher to verify with the respondents the constructions that are developing as a result of data collected and analyzed. In this research, the researcher summarized what had been said at the end of each interview and asked the respondent if the respondent's position was accurately reflected. In addition, after the transcripts of the interview were complete, the researcher checked with each respondent to discuss the contents of the transcripts and the interpretations that were being formed. In each case the respondents' additional comments and clarifications were recorded and included in the data.

Triangulation is another strategy that can contribute to credibility of qualitative techniques, methods, and analysis (Yin, 1994). The research design of this study utilizes data triangulation to increase the credibility of the findings. Three sources of information were used in the study. The student, parent, and teacher for each setting were interviewed. Consistency of different data sources was analyzed, comparing the perspectives of the students, parents, and teachers. Differences, as well as consistencies occurred in the data obtained from the different sources. The perspectives of the various stakeholders were sometimes similar, and sometimes different. When differences in perspectives emerged they were identified and the differences examined. However Guba and Lincoln (1989) do not support the notion of triangulation due to that fact that trying to find consistency across sources contradicts the notion of multiple realities. They suggest that triangulation can still be used to check on factual data, but recommend the use of member checks to determine validity.

Mertens and McLaughlin (1995) identify progressive subjectivity as another important strategy in the credibility of research. This refers to the credibility of the researcher. In qualitative research, the researcher is the research instrument. The credibility of the researcher can be affected by bias or changes in the perspective of the researcher during the course of the study. To increase the credibility of the present study, information on the researcher's experiences, training, and perspective were revealed in the first chapter, including personal and professional information that may have affected data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The researcher was sensitive to change and recorded thoughts and the process of change. In addition, the researcher constantly confronted opinions and prejudices within the data and guarded against biases by recording detailed fieldnotes that included subjective reflections.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) identified dependability as the qualitative parallel to reliability. Reliability refers to the consistency of the inferences made over time. Reliability can also be viewed as a fit between what is recorded as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). To increase the reliability of the data collected in this study, audiotapes were utilized during the interview process to assist in the accurate recording of the conversations. Checks were made between the transcriber and the researcher to ensure accurate transcribing of the materials. If further clarification was required, the participants were asked to clarify wording.

Transferability is identified by Guba and Lincoln (1989) as the qualitative parallel to external validity or generalizability of the results in quantitative research. Generalization of the results to other situations in qualitative research is dependent on the reader and the degree of similarity between the research and the reader's context.

Transferability is not a question of whether the findings are generalizable, but rather the question of to which other settings and subjects they are generalizable. The results may include statements of commonality between similar classroom settings. The researcher's responsibility for generalization in qualitative research is to provide sufficient detail and information to assist the reader in making that judgement. A thick description must be provided that involves a careful description of the time, place, context, and cultures (Mertens & McLaughlin, 1995). The present research deals with the concern of transferablility in two ways. First, a thick description of the respondents comments and stories is provided to the reader in Chapter 4 to enable the reader to compare the research setting and subjects to that with which they are familiar. Second, this research makes use of a multiple-case study design. The use of multiple-case studies can be seen as replication of a single case study and the results might be accepted for a much larger range of similar situations (Yin, 1994). The results from multiple case studies can be considered to be more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust (Herriott & Firestone, 1983).

Ethical Considerations

There are many complex ethical issues in qualitative research. The study was submitted for ethical review to the University of Alberta Faculty of Education Ethical Review Committee and met all of the necessary and appropriate ethical guidelines prior to commencement. All participants were informed of the nature of the research through a letter and meeting. There was a full and complete disclosure of the focus and components of the research to the participants and all the participants entered the research project voluntarily, understanding the nature of the study and the obligations involved. Informed consent was obtained and confidentiality of the information assured. The identities of the participants are protected in the writing of the report and in the reporting of information. The data gathered from each participant were not shared with any other participant. Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time. No participants withdrew from the study, however one parent and one teacher declined to have a follow up interview due to personal or professional reasons.

That concludes the discussion of the methods for Chapter 3. Chapter 4 follows with a presentation of the results of the study.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Introduction

This research involved five individual case studies, each comprised of a student with learning disabilities, a parent of that student, and the regular classroom teacher of that student. Interviews were conducted with each of the these three key stakeholders to gather information on their perspectives of the elementary school inclusive classroom. This resulted in five triads of interview data.

The data generated from the interviews are organized and presented in the following manner:

1. First, each case study is individually presented including data from interviews with the student, the regular education classroom teacher of that student, and a parent of that student.
2. Second, following the interview data in each case study, the similarities and differences between the perspectives of the student, the regular education teacher, and the parent are discussed.
3. Third, at the conclusion of all five case studies, the common threads and the differences among the students, the parents, and the teachers are discussed.

The names of all of the participants have been changed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. All grammatical errors in original quotations that might be confusing to the reader are identified by an *. Any additions by the author to the original text are enclosed in brackets.

Case Studies

Case Study #1 - David

Background information. David is 11 years old and is included in a regular Grade 6 classroom comprised of 29 students. David has attended the same school since Grade 1. He was enrolled in the regular classroom for Grades 1 and 2. During Grades 3 and 4, David attended the learning assistance classroom for part of the day. David was fully included in the regular classroom for Grades 5 and 6. During Grade 6, David received two or three periods a week of extra assistance with an assistant to work on classroom assignments.

Setting. The interview with David was conducted in a small brightly lit room with a round table and four chairs just off the main school hallway. David was friendly and talkative. He maintained eye contact with the interviewer and answered questions in a very forthright fashion.

What the student likes in class this year. David reported that the thing he likes best about Grade 6 is that he has a lot of friends and they play football and baseball at recess. David commented, "I really like my friends. When I go to school you* get to play with your* friends, and your* friends are there all the time."

David also said that one of the best things this year is his teacher. David reported, " My teacher is nice to me. That kind of helps me. If I am having trouble, we talk it over and he makes my life easier."

In addition, David spoke very positively about his experience as a Grade 6 student this year. He described the Grade 6 experience as "very cool…You get respect. Like the little kids…they look up to you."

What the student does not like in class this year. David reported that the only thing that he did not like was a girl that calls him names. David stated that he did not like being called names and being teased about his weight.

How this year compares to others. David enjoys Grade 6 even though Grade 6 "is a lot harder than any other year." However, David indicated that he felt he has the skills to do Grade 6 assignments. David commented, "I've been taking homework home that I didn't need to, and now I'm not leaving everything till the last minute."

David had positive things to say about the 2 years that he attended the learning assistance classroom. David liked having more time to complete assignments and found it easier to get help in the learning assistance classroom. David reported that the major drawback was that " I didn't have that many friends there...all the other people there were from different grades."

How the student is doing this year. David feels that he is doing well in school this year as his report card marks are in the 80s. The only subject he is not doing well in is French because, "It is very hard. I have difficulty understanding the words." David said, "My major problems would be spelling and reading, and I'm not doing so well on handwriting. …It is easy for me to just copy the letters but I can't even spell."

David indicated that his difficulties with spelling and handwriting make completing homework assignments challenging. David reported that his parents help him by typing his assignments on the computer. He does not use the computer often because he is "bad at typing."

What helps the student and other children in the classroom learn. David reported that his teacher made learning "fun" and when students are having fun they "pay more attention."

David also reported that working with a partner is helpful because "a partner can help me when I really need it." If David is not working with a partner he asks a friend for help. He stated, "When I'm having trouble reading, they can come over and tell me the word…and then I can keep on going."

How the teacher helps the student. David described a number of ways that his teacher helps him. David reported that his teacher provides him with reading materials that are easier to read. He felt that his teacher would not "make (him) … read books that (he) … couldn't."

David also indicated that his teacher provides him with additional help on tests. "On tests he gets somebody to read for us." David thought this was "a good idea… because once I tried to read one on my own, and I didn't get good*." David reported that his teacher also reduces that number of questions that he is required to complete on tests.

David talked positively about the way his teacher adapts homework. "He doesn't give that much homework, doesn't give us so much homework at once. And he'll extend the time if I need it." David goes to his teacher for assistance when he is having difficulties completing assignments.

Mr. T. provides support for David and the other students in the classroom when they are required to copy notes from the blackboard. David said:

> He doesn't make us write a whole page of notes off the board.…He doesn't like us writing the whole thing. He wants us to work, not just write and write and write, and get our hands all tired. He actually photocopies the page and …he just

hands us the page.

David receives two or three periods of extra help a week with an assistant, in a separate room, who reviews classroom activities or works on assignments. David explained that the assistant demonstrates how to complete problems on the board, step by step. He stated, "She helps me with work that I'm having trouble with…It helps a little bit."

Additional Information. During the interview David and the interviewer talked about the future. David spoke positively about the transition to junior high next year and is looking forward to the opportunity to choose options such as photography and sewing.

Case Study # 1 - David's teacher.

Background information. David's teacher, Mr. T., has been teaching for 29 years and he has had children with disabilities in his class for almost every one of those 29 years. This year he has 29 students and six of the 29 students have disabilities. David's teacher has attended many professional development sessions on teaching students with different types of disabilities.

How students are assigned to the class. Students with disabilities are equally distributed among each of the three Grade 6 classrooms.

Additional support provided to the teacher and the student. The teacher receives support from a student support team set up in the school to assist teachers with children with disabilities in their classrooms. The team consists of the principal, vice-principal, learning assistance teacher, counsellor, and the regular education teacher. This team meets monthly to discuss the student's progress and solve any difficulties that have arisen. Mr. T. spoke positively about the student support team and reported that, during the meetings, "the IPP is actually actively followed through on a constant basis to make sure that …the child is making progress, and that the accommodations are still working…and what can we do to change if is it isn't working." David receives two or three periods a week of additional help with an assistant in a separate classroom.

Setting. The interview with David's teacher took place in David's classroom over two lunch periods.

Perspective on inclusion. Mr. T. stated, "If the child can work in the classroom at a level of productivity that they're feeling comfortable with and they're feeling success at, I have no problem with inclusion for children in those areas."

Between the first and second interview David's teacher had been discussing the issues of inclusion with his colleagues in the staff room and reported the following perspective.

> The consensus we all had was that the special needs child who's having trouble learning, we all feel comfortable, yes we can do that. We can help that child. We are quite willing to dig in there, roll up our sleeves, and help those children. But it's when the child has a medical, severe medical problem, that we feel uncomfortable…We just don't feel like we have that expertise.

Nature of the student's strengths and weaknesses. Mr. T. indicated that David is highly successful in many of activities that Grade 6 students participate in on a regular basis. David is included in all activities and has many friendships in the classroom and on the playground. Mr. T. stated, "(David) is fairly well liked. … he's a very kind boy and that shows… He fits in pretty nicely."

Mr. T. indicated that David's biggest area of difficulty in academics is comprehension and decoding. David also experiences difficulties with spelling, handwriting, and compositional skills. However, "Math is actually a strong point for (David)...but he does run into trouble in Math with problem solving because of the lack of comprehension."

David's teacher also commented on David's classroom skills. Mr. T. felt that David has a "fragile ego" that interferes with his learning. He stated that, David, "wants to do well, but when he does meet a wall, he often will retreat and fall back on 'I can't do it,' rather than, 'I'll find a way to do it.'"

Mr. T. also observed that David is a hard working student. He reported that David wants to succeed in the classroom, and responds well to reinforcement.

Classroom adaptations. Mr. T. adapts classroom instruction in many ways for the students with special needs. On formal standardized tests David has "a reader ...(to) read all of the questions and all the material so that the comprehension doesn't get in the way of the knowledge." For regular classroom testing situations David is given additional time to complete tests and often the number of questions is reduced.

Mr. T. also adapts his marking on tests, classroom assignments, and on the report card for David. Mr. T. encourages David to complete his homework assignments on the computer. However, "If he does do it in longhand, ... I look at him ...and say, for (David), this is a ... effort, and mark him accordingly." David receives a regular report card coded for a student presently on an IPP. Mr. T. indicated that all David's marks on the report card are modified due to the support David has received in the classroom. "It's not a clear mark in terms of what he would have got had he written the tests on his own, like every other child would do."

When the reading material is difficult, Mr. T. provides support in several ways to David and the other students with learning difficulties. "If it's a difficult passage of reading, either I'm reading to them or vice versa. I've got my stronger readers reading it to me as well, and then me explaining or paraphrasing what we were reading about."

In addition to the adaptations the teacher makes in classroom activities David receives additional help from an assistant. With direction from the teacher, the assistant helps David with assignments, tests, and learning strategies.

David's teacher varies his instructional groupings to meet the needs of David and the other students with special needs. Mr. T. utilizes one-on-one, whole group and small group instruction, "whatever he seems to need at the time." In group activities Mr. T. places the children with special needs, "…in a group with …organized children, for example, or very bright children, or very articulate children, and to try to make sure that they get a shot at seeing another level of progress."

David's teacher often provides David with more time to complete homework assignments. For example, when David had difficulties completing an assignment, Mr. T. took David aside and said, "Look, let's change the due dates for the series of assignments you've got."

David's teacher, Mr. T. takes a personal interest in the progress of his students and takes additional time to mentor each student. Mr. T. reported, "Part of it is coaching, and I do a lot of that with these children, and particularly kids like (David). I coach them through things."

Mr. T. also indicated that he felt very strongly about teaching children with learning difficulties strategies for learning, and assisting the children to become as strong and as independent as possible. He said, "I find very often with the IPP children ... a lack of self-confidence, a lack of direction, (and a lack of) organizational skills." Mr. T. reported that it is necessary to teach these important skills in the classroom.

Impact of inclusion on the teacher. Mr. T. commented:

> Having an IPP child in your classroom is more of a challenge... it's a challenge of how do I get this child to pick up this concept...And you try different strategies...The rewards are far greater because those kids are so excited about being able to make the leap and understand that concept.

Mr. T. indicated that having students with special needs in the regular classroom places significant time demands on the teacher. He reported, "IPP children like (David) take up more than their share of the time."

Parent Contact. During the interview Mr. T. indicated that he has regular contact with David's parents through phone calls and parent-teacher interviews. Mr. T. met with David's parents in September to discuss the David's IPP and David's parents had an opportunity to add their input to the IPP at that time. The goals for David were to improve reading comprehension, vocabulary level, and organizational skills.

Additional Information. David's teacher talked at length about David's upcoming transition to the regular Grade 7 program next year. Mr. T. indicated that David is "going to have difficulty...because of the weaknesses he's got... and his mom and dad and I know that, and he knows that too." However, Mr T indicated that David may be able to manage the regular program with support from the counsellor and teachers.

Case Study #1 - David's Mother and Father

Setting. An interview was arranged with David's mother in the evening at David's home. After the interview began David's father returned from work and joined in the interview.

Background information. David's parents reported that David participated in the regular classroom for Grades 1 and 2, was enrolled part time in the learning assistance classroom for Grades 3 and 4, and was fully included into regular Grade 5 and 6 program. David's father reported that David could not read in Grade1 and he was struggling with all subjects by Grade 2. As a result David was, "… very negative, and very upset about school for the first 2 years…He didn't want to go to school."

David's father indicated that when David "… first went into …learning assistance he didn't like it and he wouldn't try a lot of things." After a while David started making progress because "…he started to get lots of positive feedback." However, David's mother indicated, David started coming home saying, "I'm in the dumb room." David's mother indicated that in her opinion this was due to the fact that there was a "stigma" associated with attendance in the learning assistance classroom.

The transition out of the learning assistance classroom into the regular Gade 5 classroom was very difficult for David. David's father said," He didn't want to move back into the regular classroom…(David) spent the first month…of Grde 5 crying all night." The parents were also very concerned because they had to spend a great deal of time helping David with his homework. David's mother commented, "We were working all night…we had to communicate with the teachers over the homework."

Child's strengths and weaknesses. David's parents identified a number of David's strengths. Both parents believe that reading is a strength for David. They also reported that in their opinion David has "great ideas" for writing and effectively uses organizational strategies such as mapping, brainstorming, and webs when writing. David's parents indicated that work skills are a strength for David. David's father reported that David, "…attacks things well. He takes things piece by piece, and he doesn't get overwhelmed with the whole picture too often. And he likes to get things done ahead. He doesn't leave things until the last minute."

David's parents discussed a number of their concerns regarding David's writing skills, handwriting, and spelling. They indicated that David's "spelling is indecipherable" and David "makes the same mistake over and over and over…still lots of reversals; adding letters or substituting letters." David's mother reported that although David has good ideas for writing he "lacks the mechanics to put his ideas down." David's father agreed and commented, "…It takes him longer to write…because he literally writes it letter by letter. He doesn't see a word and write a word or phrase." David frequently asks his mother to write words for him, or he composes sentences by copying the words he requires from a book. Both parents reported that they type David's writing homework for him on the computer because David struggles with word processing skills.

Description of this year and how it compares to other years. David's parents reported that "Grade 6 is David's best year so far." David's father stated that David "likes the teacher. He seems to get along well, and he's a really hard worker." David's mother indicated David is often up early and eager to go to school. David's parents are pleased with David's report card marks and both parents felt that the good marks have contributed to an improvement in David's self esteem this year. David's father said, "David used to say that he was the dumbest in the class…now he does not." They also commented that socially David is doing much better this year because "he's hanging around with kids that don't have learning issues. He sees himself as being capable." However, David has to "work on homework 2 or 3 hours a night" to keep up.

Concerns. David's parents indicated that they do not have any concerns at this time. They do not believe that David has any problems at school other than in French. David "…doesn't like French. I think he's absolutely, totally lost," the father said.

David's parents reported that transitions from grade to grade and from learning assistance to the regular classroom were very difficult for David. They believe that the difficulties were due to a lack of communication between teachers from year to year. David's parents indicated that in their opinion teachers should be prepared and knowledgeable about the children with special needs at the beginning of the year. David's father commented:

> I think for those kids ear-marked as special needs, their files should be pulled. Pulled by someone and made ready for the teacher that's receiving them, so they know early what's coming on.

David's parents have also had a number of experiences over the years where they have been very frustrated with David being required to copy notes from the board. The mother said, "I'm an educator, too. I've got no patience with somebody who doesn't have their notes typed." On occasion the parents have phoned and asked the teacher to provide David with written notes.

David's parents expressed mixed feelings about adaptations for their child during the interview. The mother said,

> I don't think that he should have had a reader. They should be testing him the same way that he's doing his regular classroom work. Just because it says he's on an IPP, he's allowed a reader, suddenly they give him a reader because of the Provincial Achievement Tests....(this results in) a fake result.

The father indicated that they know that David now receives adaptations on his tests and that he approves of the adaptations. However, he believes the adaptations "do not make a lot of difference. A few percentages 71 instead of 74 or something."

Finally, David's parents indicated that they would like to see David provided with training on technology.

Involvement with the school. David's parents reported that they have regular contact with the school in addition to the parent-teacher interviews. The parents were invited to an IPP meeting at the end of the last year but could not remember if they had a meeting again at the beginning of this year.

Parent perception of IPP goals. David's parents could not remember any of the goals or objectives on the IPP. David's parents felt that the learning objectives for David were general and not related to any specific learning strategies. David's father indicated that in his opinion "the IPP is pretty free, free-floating...The IPP gives teachers the freedom to do whatever they think will work." In addition, David's parents reported that they are confused as to whether or not David requires special adaptations in the classroom. In Grade 5 they were informed that David did not require special adaptations in the classroom even though the adaptations were outlined in the IPP. In Grade 6 they were told that David required adaptations in the classroom to be successful. David's mother questioned the difference from year to year and stated,

"There's no point in giving him a crutch that he doesn't need at the start of Grade 6 that he had already done without in Grade 5."

David's parents also expressed uncertainty as to how involved to be in the IPP process. David's father said,

> I've tended not to want to sort of start at the beginning of the year like, okay, what are you going to do for my son? ...I kind of hold back and ...let them deal with it. ...maybe I should have been more involved, I don't know.

Additional information. During the interview David's parents talked about the future and David's move to junior high next year. David's mother indicated that in her opinion David will be comfortable in junior high with his friends and would likely not experience problems. David's father commented that David may have trouble with the new vocabulary in junior high and many not be able to manage. However, he felt that if David was provided with support and structure on his tests David would be successful.

Case #1 - Comparison of the stakeholder perspectives.

Similarities in the perspectives. The perspectives of the three key stakeholders were similar in a number of respects. David, his parents, and his teacher all indicated that David is doing well socially and academically in the regular Grade 6 classroom. All three key stakeholders also indicated that David has a strong work ethic. David and his parents both reported that David's teacher is one of the best aspects of this year and a factor that is contributing to David's success this year. Both David's parents and his teacher talked about David's poor "self esteem" or "fragile ego."

Differences in the perspectives. Differences were noted in several areas. David and his parents differed somewhat in their perspectives on the learning assistance classroom. David indicated that he liked attending the learning assistance classroom even though he did not have many friends there. The parents expressed concerns that David's participation in the learning assistance classroom was related to negative stigma at school.

There were also differences in perspectives regarding the nature of David's learning difficulties. David reported that he has difficulties with spelling, reading, and handwriting and requires adaptations in the classroom to be successful. David's parents discussed David's difficulties with spelling and handwriting, but indicated that they did not believe that David has difficulties with reading or organizational skills. David's parents were not sure that David requires adaptations in the classroom. David's teacher identified that David has difficulties with spelling, handwriting, composition skills, and reading, and stated that David requires adaptations in the classroom to be successful.

There is also discrepancy in the perspectives of the stakeholders regarding David's move to junior high next year. David is excited about next year and is not worried about academics. David's mother felt that David would be fine in junior high with his friends. David's father expressed concerns about new vocabulary and David's ability to keep up. David's teacher stated that the regular program is an appropriate junior high placement for David, although David will likely experience difficulties.

There appeared to be some confusion regarding the IPP document. The parents could not remember if they met this year and were not familiar with the goals on the IPP. David's teacher spoke at length about the IPP process and the goals, and reported that the parents had been involved in the process.

The stakeholders had different perspectives on David's report card marks. David was very pleased that his math mark has improved from the 70s to the 80s and was very pleased about his improved performance. David's parents demonstrated an awareness that the marks were adapted for David but felt that David was doing well in class. David's teacher reported that the marks David received have been adapted and are not indicative of marks David would have received if he had been evaluated in a similar fashion to the other students in the class.

The use of the computer to complete assignments is another area were the perspectives of the stakeholders differed. David told the interviewer that his parents typed his assignments on the computer for him. David's teacher was very pleased that David was handing in his assignments typed on a word processor but he indicated that David was doing the typing.

Case Study #2 - Brian.

Background Information. Brian is 11years old and is included in a regular Grade 5 classroom of 24 students. Brian attends the learning assistance classroom for reading instruction for part of each morning. There is an assistant in the classroom to support the children with special needs.

Setting. The first interview with Brian was conducted in a small room just off the main school hallway. The second interview took place in the boot room with Brian and the interviewer sitting informally on the floor with legs crossed. During the first interview Brian was very quiet and kept his answers to a minimum. During the second interview Brian was more candid with the interviewer and shared many personal perspectives.

What the student likes in class this year. Brian, like David, indicated that the two best things this year are his friends and his teacher. Brian also likes art, gym, computers, and library.

What the student does not like in class this year. Brian reported that he does not like the assistant in the Grade 5 classroom. When the interviewer ask him to explain he replied, "It's just everything about her. I just don't like her."

In particular, Brian, like David, does not like being teased at school. He reported that when someone makes fun of him it is "really frustrating." When Brian is frustrated he stated, "I talk in a loud and angry voice, or I whisper something really rude and they shut up for a little while."

How this year compares to others. Brian, like David, indicated that this year is harder than previous years. Although the work is more difficult, Brian reported that he "can focus better" and he has not "got into as much trouble." Brain has also made progress in academics. Brian stated, "I've already learned a grade and a half, just in Grade 5 for reading. And last year, I only learned like half a grade."

How the student is doing this year. Brian talked about his grades and subjects in school. Brain, like David, reported that he does not do well in French because "French is hard." He indicated that he does not like, or do well in, health because the teacher does not like him. However, all Brian's grades except for French are higher this year. Brian stated that he is good at math although he "is slower than the other students." Brian's bests grades are in gym. Brian informed the interviewer that he does not do well on tests because he "can't study."

Brain reported that he experiences frustration completing classroom assignments. "Right now it's a bit hard for me to focus....It's hard just to get stuff done." Homework is also a source of frustration for Brian. He said, "I don't do homework. I don't know why, I've just never been able to do homework." Brian stated that he would prefer to do his homework during the day at school at recess because he usually has "other stuff when I get home...and with homework, it just goes crazy."

What helps the student and other children in the classroom learn. Brian reported that the teacher helps him and other students in the classroom learn by "explain(ing) things to the class." Unlike David, who indicated that working with a partner is very helpful, Brian expressed mixed perspectives regarding partner and group work. Brian indicated that he does not enjoy working with a partner or in a group but it "depends on who you're working with."

How the teacher helps the student. Brian's teacher helps him in several ways. If Brian needs help in the classroom he just asks for help and the teacher explains the problem "in a more logical way." The teacher also reduces the number of questions Brian is required to complete. Brian reported that completing every other question "...is not as hard and not as frustrating."

Overall, Brian's perspective on classroom adaptations and modifications was very different from David's. David talked very positively about everything his teacher did to help him in the classroom. Brian indicated that, "sometimes I want help on some things…but if its something that will affect me in life I want to learn to do it myself." Brian spoke negatively about marking adaptations.

> (The teacher) marks my projects a lot different. I don't know why. We had a major project not too long ago. The other …(learning assistance) kids all got 25/50 and they handed their projects in on time. I handed mine in late and I got 35/50 for my rough copy. I was happy I didn't fail. My mom was unhappy because I procrastinated and started late, and she wanted me to fail so that I would learn a lesson. She (the teacher) lets me off of a lot of things which I don't really like. … I want an honest grade that I did all by myself without any help from anyone.

Additional Information. Brian talked positively about his experiences in the learning assistance classroom. Like David, he reported that he gets "more help" in the learning assistance classroom and the activities are "fun." Brian also appreciates the fact that the learning assistance teacher does not allow teasing in the classroom. In Brian's opinion, the only drawback to the learning assistance classroom is the fact that the assistant that he does not like also works in the learning assistance classroom. Brian stated that he would like to progress academically so that he would no longer have to attend the learning assistance classroom. However, he said, "if I'm totally behind and having too many troubles, then I'll go back to …(learning assistance) because I need it."

Case Study #2 – Brian's Teacher

Background information. Brian's teacher, Mrs. S., has been teaching for 30 years and many of those years she has taught children with disabilities in her classroom. This year Mrs. S. has 24 students in her class and nine of those children have been identified as having a disability. Brian's teacher has attended a number of professional development activities related to children with disabilities.

How students with special needs are assigned to the class. All the Grade 5 students with disabilities are placed in this Grade 5 class. The rationale for placing all the students with disabilities in the same classroom is that it is less disruptive to all of the Grade 5 classrooms if the students that attend the learning assistance classroom for Language Arts are all scheduled at the same time from the same classroom.

Additional support provided to the teacher and the student. As in the first case study, there is a student support team in the school to support teachers with children with disabilities. David and the other Grade 5 students in the classroom with disabilities attend the learning assistance classroom for language arts instruction every morning.

Setting: Brian's teacher was interviewed in a quiet room adjacent to the staff room during two lunch hour periods.

Perspective on inclusion. Mrs. S. talked about her perspective on inclusion:

> I think that inclusion, for many children, is very beneficial for everybody. I think that for the child it is really good, because they are part of a peer group. And I think it's good for the peers to learn how to get along with other people that have problems. … (However,) if children cannot get involved with any of the activities,

> intellectually or physically, I think … inclusion is hopeless.

Nature of student's strengths and weaknesses. Mrs. S. reported that Brian has several strengths. Brian receives good grades in Math and is "…very gifted in Phys. Ed." Mrs. S. indicated that in her opinion Brian "likes the discussions, and he likes to present his ideas."

Brain experiences difficulties in a number of areas. Mrs. S. indicated that Brian struggles with reading, writing, Social, and Science. Mrs. S. reported that Brian's major area of concern is social skills and behavior. Brian "has a lot of social problems getting along with others, following the rules of the class." Mrs. S. stated Brian is "struggling socially with the other kids…(and) struggling with his school…and yet he's accomplished a great deal…he's still progressing."

Classroom adaptations. Mrs. S. described several instructional adaptations she has tried in the classroom for Brian that have not been successful. There is an assistant in the classroom to help Brian and all students with classroom assignments. Unfortunately the assistant and Brian have a "personality conflict," and Brian refuses to work with the assistant.

Mrs. S., like Mr. T., indicated that she utilizes group and partner work in the classroom to support the children with learning difficulties. However, Brian has difficulty working with a partner or in a group. Group work is "…a problem for him because he has a lot of problems with other kids and …they don't want to go with him." As a result of Brian's dislike of the assistant and his difficulties working with other students, the teacher often works one-on-one with Brian.

Mrs. S., like Mr. T., reported that she provides testing adaptations such as a reader and reduced items for students with special needs in her classroom. However she has not had success with testing modifications for Brian because Brian refuses to have anyone read the test for him as "he would rather work things out for himself."

Mrs. S. indicated that homework is a daily struggle with Brian. Brian is assigned less homework and his homework completion is monitored in a homework book. Mrs. S. reported, "If the homework is done, we're thrilled, in any form."

Impact of inclusion on the teacher. Similar to Mr. T., Mrs. S. indicated that time is a factor when children with special needs are included in the classroom. Mrs. S. also reported that including children with learning difficulties in the classroom increases the stress level in the classroom. For example, although Mrs. S. would like more assistant time to help her meet the needs of the children with disabilities in the classroom, working with an assistant in the classroom "adds to the extra workload that teacher already has."

Similar to Mr. T., Mrs. S. also reported a positive impact of inclusion on the teacher. "There are great benefits to you when you see them progress…it's a real positive experience."

Parent contact. Mrs. S. indicated that she has limited contact with Brian's parents as Brian's mother and the learning assistance teacher work very closely together. Mrs. S. is comfortable with this situation and is able to contribute to the IPP during the student support team meetings.

Case #2 – Brian's Mother

Setting. Brian's mother was interviewed over two lunch hours at her place of employment.

Background information. Brian's mother informed the interviewer that school has always been a struggle for Brian due to the fact that "he's never been a sit-down quiet kid." Brian experienced difficulties in kindergarten and spent 2 years in Grade 1. In the first year of Grade 1 Brian "couldn't give you letters of the alphabet, yet his math skills were amazing. He could beat anybody at chess by the time he was seven." During the second year of Grade 1, Brian was assessed at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital and a learning disability was identified.

Brian's mother decided to teach Brian at home for Grade 2 because of the difficulties he was having in the classroom. Brian's mother reported that after a year of home schooling Brian finally knew his alphabet, was starting to read, and write at a rudimentary level. Brian returned to school for Grade 3 and was enrolled part time in the learning assistance classroom. Brian's mother reported that the learning assistance teacher was "very good" with Brian, and Brian's attendance in the learning assistance classroom was "absolutely critical" to Brian's survival in the school.

In Grade 4 Brian indicated that he did not want to be in learning assistance and refused to attend class. After several weeks of failing to cope with the Grade 4 curriculum, Brian agreed to return to the learning assistance classroom. Since that time he has attended the learning assistance classroom for language arts instruction.

Brian's mother reported that they still rely on the learning assistance teacher even though Brian only goes to learning assistance for part of the morning. If Brian is having difficulties in the regular classroom, the learning assistance teacher intervenes and assists Brian with the problem.

Child's strengths and weaknesses. Brian's mother reported that Brian has a number of strengths. In her opinion Brian has a very kind heart, has good math skills, and is very athletic.

Brian's mother reported that social skills are a major area of concern for Brian. The social skills problems surfaced when Brian returned to school after being home-schooled. Brian reported to her that the other students were teasing him and calling the students from learning assistance "retards" and other "evil stuff." This bothered Brian a great deal and he'd say to his mother, "'I'm not a retard'." Brian's mother indicated she is not sure if the teasing continues to bother Brian. She also reported that Brian is having more success with friendships this year.

Description of this year and how it compares to other years. Brian's mother reported Brian's academic, and social and emotional skills have improved this year. She said, "I think this year has probably been the hardest and the most productive year." She is aware that there are a number of adaptations in the Grade 5 classroom for Brian but that Brian chooses to complete classroom tasks independently. Brian's mother reported that "he seems to be doing fairly successfully without" additional support.

Concerns. Brian's mother indicated that she has no concerns this year. However she is concerned about the future and the transition to junior high school.

Involvement with the school. Brian's mother feels that she and the learning assistance teacher are a team and they contact each other by e-mail or communication book daily. The relationship is based on " a trust thing that's been built up over the years." Brian's mother indicated that she has very little contact with the Grade 5 teacher and if she has concerns about the regular Grade 5 classroom the learning assistance teacher is the intermediary.

Parent perception of IPP goals. Brian's mother reported that she is minimally involved in the development of the IPP. The learning assistance teacher sends the completed IPP home and if Brian's mother has comments she writes them on the IPP or e-mails the teacher. Brian's mother is satisfied with this arrangement and indicated that she could have more input but she "trusts" the learning assistance teacher.

Case Study #2 - Comparison of the Stakeholder Perspectives.

Similarities in the perspectives. There were a number of similarities in the perspectives of Brian, his mother, and his regular education teacher. All three stakeholders identified math and physical activity as a strength for Brian. All three stakeholders reported Brian's academic progress this year and his desire to complete classroom activities independently. All three stakeholders described Brian's struggles with social skills, however Brian and his mother indicated that Brian has developed several friendships this year. All three stakeholders also reported difficulties with homework completion. Brian and his mother spoke positively about Brian's attendance in the learning assistance classroom and indicated a dependence on the learning assistance for support. Brian's teacher and Brian's mother made similar comments regarding the IPP process. Brian and his teacher reported that he does not like the assistant in the classroom.

Differences in the perspectives. Different perspectives regarding teasing were noted. Brian spoke to the interviewer regarding his frustration with teasing and how he responds to the teasing so that his peers will leave him alone. Brian's mother was aware of "evil" teasing in the past but indicated that she did not believe that this was still an issue for Brian. Brian's teacher's comments focused on Brian's behavior towards other students.

Brian was the only stakeholder to make strong comments about marking adaptations. Brian indicated that although he liked to pass, he would like to have an honest that he achieved without help from anyone. Brian's mother and the Grade 5 teacher did not mention or discuss concerns with marking practices.

Case Study #3 - Jim

Background information. Jim is 12 years old and is included in a regular Grade 6 classroom comprised of 28 students. Jim has attended the same school since Grade 1. He attended the learning assistance classroom for part of the day during Grades 1 through 4. Jim was fully included in the regular classroom for Grades 5 and 6. During Grade 6, Jim received additional help in the classroom from an assistant, and due to the fact that he has withdrawn from French, he has had the scheduled time for French to work on homework assignments.

Setting. The interview with Jim was conducted in a small brightly lit room with a round table and four chairs just off the main school hallway. Jim was very polite during the interview and appeared to be very confident. He maintained eye contact with the interviewer and spoke in a mature fashion.

What the student likes in class this year. Jim reported that the best thing about this year is the fact that he has "one permanent classroom." He said that he would rather stay in one classroom and not go from one class to another because "it's more easy* to keep track of things that way." Jim also likes "...the fact that you also just have one teacher to be with, not just two...it's pretty confusing if you have two."

Jim, like David and Brian, reported that he likes this year because he has friends in the classroom. He stated, "now I'm happy to be in the classroom that I'm normally in so I can be with my friends."

What the student does not like in class this year. Jim reported that he does not \ like having more than one teacher. The classroom teacher has changed frequently this year due to a maternity leave and illness, and Jim stated that this has been "confusing."

The second aspect of this year that Jim indicated that he does not like is copying notes from the board. Jim described his difficulties copying notes quickly and the fact that the teacher erases notes from the board. Jim reported that if his notes are not complete when the teacher erases the board he is "just stuck."

How this year compares to others. Jim compared his years in the learning assistance classroom to Grade 6. " Learning assistance is nice for those kids who have problems, such as learning disabilities. ... I have problems concentrating...in a smaller group everything's silent, everything is just that much better." Jim also reported that he learned to "do better and harder" work in the learning assistance classroom.

Jim reported that the move out of the learning assistance classroom to the regular classroom was a challenge. He stated "It's kind of a very hard change from (learning assistance)... to go into a regular system..., you're kind of more not sure about what you have to do."

In previous years, Jim reported that he had difficulties concentrating on his work. At this point in time, "I kind of got a little bit better, and now it's going fine."

How the student is doing this year. Jim reported that although he experienced many difficulties at the beginning of the year, Grade 6 has "been a pretty good year" due to the fact that he is "taking school more seriously." Jim reported that his grade in Math has improved and his grade in Social is "hanging on the line." Jim reported that he thinks that his performance in Language Arts is adequate, but that his teacher tells him that he needs to improve in some areas. He said, "I'm not really understanding what I don't do right and what I don't do wrong." Jim reported that he receives good grades in Music and does "okay in Phys. Ed."

Like Brian, homework is a concern for Jim. He said, "it kind of makes me really frustrated and it's not a good feeling." Jim indicated that he would appreciate having a little less homework and a longer time to complete assignments.

What helps the student and other children in the classroom learn. Jim reported that what helps him learn is having a timetable to look at on the blackboard. He stated, "I find it kind of handy if you have a timetable, like what subject is going to be next, so you* can be prepared for what's coming up."

In Jim's opinion, having a quiet place to work and study helps him learn because he has problems concentrating. Jim reported that his teacher provides him and other students with a place to work that is quiet. "Then we have the chance to kind of work a little bit harder and we get things done faster…It's quieter, you can concentrate."

In addition, Jim stated:

> It is good to borrow someone's notes, and study off theirs….You might not have all the answers to what you need to know. Some of the things that you have

> might be wrong and be on the test, and if you just study from what you have, then if it's not right then you don't have the answers.

How the teacher helps the student. Jim, similarly to David and Brian, indicated that his teacher reduces the number of questions he has to complete on homework assignments and tests. Jim finds this helpful because it helps him focus on the questions he has to do instead of worrying if he can get his work done. Jim, like David, reported that working with a partner on assignments is helpful. Jim explained working with a partner "…kind of works faster …, because sometimes you can't just keep writing and look up on the board and taking extra minutes just to see where you are and stuff."

Jim indicated that because he found French so difficult he is not taking French this year. He reported that utilizing the scheduled time for French to study or catch up on homework was very helpful.

Additional information. Jim reported that he is able to solve many of his problems by getting help and had words of wisdom for other students with learning disabilities. "Don't just keep it inside. You can't be embarrassed going up and getting help. Life isn't about being embarrassed. It's about getting things done."

Jim also indicated that having a teacher help is very important.

> For those kids who have problems, …give them that help that they need, and less work to do. … Make sure they know how to do it. …Spend some time with them. …Check on them. The extra things really help. …The time that you spend with them…they'll never forget.

Case #3 – Jim's Teacher

Background information. Jim's teacher, Mr. M., has been teaching for 22 years at the elementary school level and has been a school administrator. Mr. M. indicated that he has worked with students with disabilities in the classroom every year. Mr. M. has had experience teaching children with behavior disorders, and has worked with students that had a variety of behavior and misconduct issues in an institutional setting. There are 28 students in the Grade 6 classroom this year. Nine of the 28 students have been identified as having a disability. Mr. M. reported that he has been involved in many professional development activities pertaining to children with disabilities.

Additional services provided to the teacher and the student. As in the first and second case studies, there is a student support team in the school to support teachers with children with disabilities. Similar to David's teacher, Mr. M. described the student support team in a positive way. He stated that the student support team is "very helpful, because it keeps us on our toes and keeps us cognizant that these are special needs students who do require the assistance and the modification." There is an assistant in the Grade 6 classroom to support the children with special needs and Jim receives one hour a week out of the classroom with an assistant to work on classroom assignments.

Setting. Jim's teacher was interviewed during the lunch hour in a quiet room located adjacent to the staff room.

Perspective on inclusion. Jim's teacher stated:

> There's certainly some pros and cons...My feeling is that, as far as these students go, that they are gaining more by being in the classroom than they are at being totally segregated all day long. On the other side of the coin, there are some true benefits to having a … Special Education teacher, work with them on a half-time

> basis. ...So I think this blend that we have here seems to work out best where they get the best of both worlds.

Nature of student's strengths and weaknesses. Mr. M indicated that Jim's main area of difficulty is his inability to process information as quickly as do other students in the classroom. Time management and organizational skills are a problem for Jim and he is unable to stay focused on his work. Although Jim has some independent skills, the teacher reported that Jim requires monitoring and additional motivation to stay on task. In the area of academics Jim has difficulties with Math, and his reading and writing skills are not at grade level. In the area of social skills, Mr. M. commented that Jim "is kind of a loner in the classroom socially. He's very quiet." Mr. M. reported that Jim has difficulties finding a partner for activities, and appears "intimidated" in group situations.

Despite Jim's difficulties with social skills in the classroom Mr. M. indicated that Jim has friendships on the playground "He doesn't have a lot of friends, but he does have a couple of friends that he associates with, and plays with, and he seems very happy." In addition, Mr. M stated that " on a one-on-one basis, he's got a great sense of humour, and he actually has a fantastic vocabulary, verbal vocabulary. ...He's very polite and almost adult-like in his conversation."

Classroom adaptations. Mr. M. indicated that Jim receives extra help in addition to the instruction in the classroom. There is an assistant who works with Jim and other students with difficulties on reading, writing, and Math as well as on studying for tests and homework.

Similarly to David and Brian's teachers, Mr. M. reduces the amount of work Jim must complete on assignments "usually by half." He also adapts his expectations for

Jim on assignments in terms of the "quality of the work." In addition, "homework expectations are reduced" although "the expectation is that he should be able to finish the work at home."

Mr. M. described several other modifications made for Jim in the classroom. "For example, in the Math area, he's been given a multiplication chart that he has accessible all the time for himself, as well as the use of the calculator." Mr. M. also provides Jim with motivation and cues for time management to ensure that he's ready for class, and he has all his material available and ready.

Like Mr. T. and Mr. S., Mr. M. provides testing modifications for Jim such as reduced questions and a reader.

Impact of inclusion on the teacher. Like Mr. T. and Mrs. S., Mr. M. reported that the most serious impact of inclusion on the teacher is time due to the one-to-one attention required by the child with special needs and the additional program planning required. In Mr. M.'s opinion, this results in extra burden for the teacher.

Parent contact. Mr. M. reported that he has regular contact with the parents of students in his class. He often speaks with parents on a weekly basis, just to "touch base." During the year, he also updates the parents regarding the IPP and meets with parents during the scheduled parent teacher interview times.

Jim's IPP was established at the beginning of the year before Mr. M. arrived at the school. Mr. M. has modified some of the IPP goals based on his observations and experiences with Jim in the classroom.

Case Study #3 – Jim's father

Setting. Jim's father was interviewed at the family acreage.

Background information. Jim's father reported Jim started exhibiting learning problems at a very young age. Jim's father noticed that Jim had problems in play school interacting with the other children. The social problems persisted into kindergarten, despite the fact that Jim was "grasping the basic stuff that they were learning…colours and ABC's and stuff." Jim continued to experience difficulties in Grade 1 so the school conducted a formal assessment. At that point it was discovered that Jim had a non-verbal learning disability. Jim attended the learning assistance classroom part time for Grades 1 through 4. Jim's father reported that the learning assistance classroom helped Jim.

Jim moved out of the learning assistance classroom in Grade 5 and was fully included in the regular classroom. Jim's father reported that in his opinion Jim handled the transitions in and out of the learning assistant program quite well. Jim's father felt the transitions were successful because Jim "was consistently going to the same school, and a lot of the teachers have been there for a lot of years. They all talk, and they all know (Jim)."

Child's strengths and weaknesses. Jim's father reported that Jim has always been strong in reading and writing. He stated, "He's always been ahead of other students, of his peers, in reading and writing. But I think now that he's in Grade 6, that's just about equalized." Jim's father reported that Math is a weak subject for Jim, and "this year he struggles with Social."

Jim's father observed that Jim has difficulty with organization skills. He stated, "He's very quick to forget to bring stuff home from school or to do something in the morning." In addition, Jim is easily distracted from his work. "He would be in the classroom or sitting at home, and you'd be talking to him about something, helping him with his homework, and it would be just something like a bug flying around and you'd lose him."

Jim's father indicated that Jim has difficulties with social skills. He reported that Jim has had difficulty associating with his peers and has not experienced many close relationships until this year.

> I think (Jim) has only one relatively close friend at school. But he relates very well to …adults …and little kids…especially ones that are out there looking for somebody to talk to, or that need a hand with something .

Description of this year and how this year compares to others. Jim's father reported that "this year…is better than last year." He attributes this change to the fact that he is now consistently working with Jim. This has resulted in an improvement in Jim's marks, "a real accomplishment." However, Jim's father reported, working with Jim takes up a great deal of time. "It took a lot of hours."

Concerns. Jim's father reported Jim has experienced a number of difficulties at school this year. He reported that Jim struggles when there is a change in teachers and when there is a substitute teacher in the classroom, and these changes have occurred frequently this year. Not only does Jim struggle with the changes, but Jim's father is concerned that "the substitutes don't have a clue what's going on."

Jim's father is also concerned about Jim being required to take notes from the board.

> Well, what they're supposed to be doing is…making copies of those notes and handing them to him so he doesn't have to write that all down. Because what I

> was finding is that he'd get half the notes copied. Or he'd get half the answers filled in, and when it came to test time, he could only study half of it because the other half wasn't done.

Jim's father indicated that the amount of homework Jim brings home is a concern. "He always gets lots of homework. And he's …not quick with his homework, especially his Math." He described how he copies "the questions down for (Jim)… and leave(s) him to solve the problems." This reduces the amount of time Jim and his father spend on homework and, in Jim's father's opinion, Jim is "better off to spend the time working the problems out."

Involvement with the school. Jim's father indicated that it is important "to keep regular tabs on what's going on …at school." Keeping "tabs" on school work requires a great deal of his father's time; however, he stated, "when I see progress being made, then it's all well worth it."

Parent's perception of IPP goals. Jim's father reported that he does not believe that Jim is on an IPP this year. He indicated that Jim is in the regular Grade 6 program except for French.

Additional information. Similarly to David and Brian's parents, Jim's father is concerned about Jim's future. He reported that Jim has been accepted into the transition program next year but he does not "know how it'll be once he goes to junior high."

Case Study #3 – Comparison of the Stakeholder Perspectives

Similarities in the perspectives. There was consensus between the three stakeholders regarding Jim's friendships in the classroom. Both Jim's father and his teacher indicated that Jim relates very well to adults. Jim and his father reported Jim's positive experiences with the learning assistance classroom, his difficulties with teacher changes and copying notes from the board, and Jim's difficulties completing homework. All three stakeholders indicated that Jim has difficulties with distractibility and organization skills, and agree that overall, Jim has done well in Grade 6.

Differences in the perspectives. There are differences in the perspectives related to Jim's strengths and weaknesses. Jim reported that he does well in Music and Physical Education, but has difficulties with Math and Social. Jim is not sure what his difficulties are in Language Arts. Jim's father reported that in his opinion Jim has improved in Math and has grade appropriate reading and writing skills, and that Jim struggles with Social. Mr. M. reported that Jim has difficulties with reading, writing, and Math.

Jim and his father reported different experiences with the transition from the learning assistance classroom to the regular classroom. Jim reported that the move out of the learning assistance classroom into the regular classroom was a challenge because he was not sure what he had to do. Jim's father felt that Jim handled the transition out of the learning assistance classroom quite well.

Jim and his teacher expressed differing views regarding Jim's level of confidence in the classroom. Jim reported that he is able to solve his problems in the classroom. Jim's teacher indicated that he believes that Jim is still quite intimidated in classroom situations.

There are also discrepancies in the perspectives of Jim's father and the teacher in regards to the IPP. Jim's father stated that Jim is not on an IPP this year. Jim's teacher indicated that Jim is on an IPP that is regularly updated with the parents.

Case Study #4 - Alex

Background information. Alex is 11 years old and is included in a regular Grade 5 classroom comprised of 27 students. Alex attends the learning assistance classroom every morning for Language Arts instruction.

Setting. Alex was interviewed in a small room just down the hallway from his Grade 5 classroom. The room contained a teacher's desk and chair, as well as a round table and two chairs. Alex appeared to be very comfortable in the interview situation.

What the student likes in class this year. Similar to David and Brian, Alex stated that two of the things he likes best about this year are his teacher and the fact that the teacher makes learning "fun." Alex described a check mark system in the classroom that he likes. where "you can get a check for everything you do…At the end of the week if you have more than seven checks you get a coupon for things like free time, or chew* gum in class."

Alex also enjoys his involvement in the student leadership program. As part of the student leadership program, he is involved in helping other students solve problems on the playground. He commented, "It's fun and interesting. You get to help other people. It feels good to help kids."

Alex also likes the new football field. "It's really cool." At recess Alex and his friends play "football soccer," which is like rugby with no tackling. Alex indicated that playing sports is very important to him.

Alex reported that he likes Social Studies this year because he is "good" at Social

Studies.

What the student does not like in class this year. Alex reported that he does not like Math and Language Arts. He dislikes Math because "It's so hard, and it takes a long time to do it." He also dislikes writing and reading.

How this year compares to others. Alex told the interviewer that this year is better than other years because he has a "better teacher."

How the student is doing this year. Alex reported that he has difficulties with Math and Language Arts, although his teacher has indicated to him that his reading is improving. He indicated that his mark in Social is "okay" and in Science his "mark needs to come up."

Alex reported that he has many friends that he plays "football soccer" with. Several of these friends are in the learning assistance classroom, others are in his Grade 5 classroom.

What helps the student and other children in the classroom learn. Similarly to David, Brian, and Jim, Alex reported positive experiences in the learning assistance classroom. Like Jim, Alex indicated that the learning assistance classroom atmosphere helps him "concentrate." Alex also stated that he learns strategies such as how to study spelling words in the learning assistance classroom.

Alex indicated that the teacher does several things in the classroom to help students learn. Alex reported that the teacher gives students worksheets that help them learn. He also explained that he finds it helpful when the teacher draws diagrams on the board to explain difficult concepts.

Similarly to David and Jim, Alex reported that working in pairs helps him and the other students in the classroom to learn. He stated, "If you don't know a question, you can ask another person."

How the teacher helps the student. Similarly to David, Brian, and Jim, Alex reported that he approaches his teacher for help at recess. Alex's teacher also assigns him less homework than other students in the class. Similar to David, Alex indicated that his teacher "photocopies the notes" from the board and provides him with a copy.

Case #4 – Alex's Teacher

Background information. Alex's teacher, Mr. B., has been teaching for 13 years. and each of those 13 years he taught children with disabilities in his classroom. There are 27 students in the Grade 5 classroom this year and eight of the 27 students have disabilities. Mr. B. reported that he has taken one course focusing on children with disabilities and has also been involved in many professional development activities.

How students are assigned to the class. As in Case Study #2, all of the Grade 5 students with learning difficulties are placed in this classroom.

Additional support provided to the teacher and the student. Alex attends the learning assistance classroom for remedial instruction in Language Arts. Alex's teacher and the learning assistance teacher, who has a special education background, meet at least once a week to discuss classroom concerns and spend time planning so they are "on the same program." Alex's teacher is released from his regular classroom teaching duties by the counsellor who helps by covering the class.

Setting. Alex's teacher was interviewed in his classroom during the lunch hour and after school in his classroom.

Perspective on inclusion. Alex's teacher discussed his perspective on inclusion:

> Inclusion does pose, definitely, as a problem with teachers, there's no doubt about it. We have to try and find extra time for those kids who have those learning disabilities...That's where the (learning assistance) program comes in handy. There are small groups for Language and for Math, so it really helps them all.

Nature of the student's strengths and weaknesses. Mr. B. reported that one of Alex's strengths is that he fits in very well socially. "Alex gets along. He has an excellent sense of humour. ...(and) he's a lot of fun."

Mr. B. indicated that Alex is currently participating in the regular Grade 5 Math program. Previously, Alex had been attending the learning assistance classroom for remedial help in Math. The move back to the regular class was difficult for Alex, and Mr. B stated, "(Alex) was a little upset after even, I think, the first or second day." Mr. B. indicated that, in his opinion, Alex was upset because he was not ready for the pace of the Math lessons in the regular class. Mr. B. reported that at this point in time Alex is successful in the Math program and is "fairly comfortable."

Mr. B. indicated that Alex has difficulties remembering concepts, writing, and reading. Alex remembers material that is read to him but has difficulties with reading comprehension and reading independently.

Classroom adaptations. There are a number of classroom adaptations Mr. B. makes in his classroom that are similar to those of the teachers in the previous case studies. Mr. B.provides Alex with extra time to complete assignments, ensures that someone is available to read tests to Alex, reduces the number of questions Alex is required to complete, and reduces and monitors the amount of homework. Similarly to

Mr. T., Mr. B provides Alex with a photocopy of notes.

Mr. B. also stated that he works hard to keep the students with disabilities motivated to participate. He stated, "I try and make things interesting… and make everything kind of a game."

Mr. B., similarly to Mr. T., Mrs. S., and Mr. M, reported that he utilizes partner and group work to provide additional support to the students with disabilities in his classroom. He indicated that this benefits the weaker students and "it's amazing how much they do learn from another fellow student."

Impact of inclusion on the teacher. Similar to the other teachers, Alex's teacher reported that the most significant impact of inclusion on the teacher is "definitely time."

Parent contact. Mr. B. reported that the IPP is developed by the regular classroom teacher and the learning assistance teacher working as a team. The IPP is discussed with the parents and updated at every parent teacher interview. Mr. B stated, "There's the understanding that we follow (the IPP) very closely and we try to make adjustments accordingly. Any time we make contact or any time we make an adjustment, I talk to them." Mr. B. also indicated that he makes periodic phone calls to the parents.

Case Study #4 – Alex's Mother

Setting. Alex's mother was interviewed at her home in the evening.

Background information. Alex attended Grades 1 and 2 in a school in Ontario, where he experienced learning difficulties but was not provided any additional support. Alex enrolled in the current school in Grade 3, and attended the learning assistance classroom for Language Arts and Math instruction during Grades 3 and 4. Alex is currently in Grade 5 and attends the learning assistance classroom for Language Arts. Alex's mother believes that during Grade 5 she has witnessed "quite a leap of improvement…(that) is a cumulative factor of the 2 previous years' work."

Child's strengths and weaknesses. Alex's mother indicated that Alex has very good social skills. Alex "…seems to get along well with kids….He has friends, he plays at recess." Alex's mother identified Alex's weaknesses as "a short-term memory (problem), which results in difficulties in learning to read and remembering the patterns, remembering the concepts." This short term memory problem also effects Alex's ability to do Math and remember instructions. She also reported that Alex has had a slight "speech difficulty" that affects his ability to spell.

Description of this year and how this year compares to others. Alex's mother reported that Grade 5 has been much better than previous years due to the fact that Alex is "now accomplishing" things. She stated:

> I think he has really caught on to doing well and getting good marks and finishing his assignments. In the earlier grades…if he got half the assignment done, they'd be happy that he got half of it done and we won't* worry about the other half… He had a lot of unfinished projects. I don't think he was seeing the benefit of doing half the job.

Alex's mother also discussed Alex's move to the regular classroom for Math instruction this year. She reported, "We have given it a try and it seems to have gone well…His mark is good and his participation in class is good, and the teacher feels that it's fine. And he's more challenged, so he enjoys it more."

Concerns. Alex's mother reported that Alex enjoys the learning assistance classroom, but worries about what he is missing in the regular classroom. Alex's mother reported that Alex has discussed with her the difficulties he has had finding out what assignments were assigned in the time that he was out of class and understanding how to complete the assignments. She stated, "There are some frustrations when he comes back to the classroom."

Involvement with the school. Alex's mother reported that she does not have "any in-the-school involvement." She feels it is her responsibility to assist Alex with homework in the evening. Alex's mother attends parent teacher conferences, preferring to meet with the classroom teacher and the learning assistance teacher separately. She indicated that she has more success dealing with problems when they are addressed by the learning assistance teacher and relies on the support of the learning assistance teacher. Alex's mother also reported that she is involved with the teachers and the school through phone calls. She indicated that she "receive(d) half a dozen phone calls through the year. Either to say we're going to change to a different approach, how do you feel about that? Or maybe a perception of a changed attitude, wondering if we're seeing the same at home." Alex's mother indicated that this level of involvement is satisfactory.

Parent's perception of IPP goals. Alex's mother stated that she talks with the teachers early in the school year about Alex's IPP and throughout the year updates to the IPP are addressed through phone calls and during the parent teacher conferences. Alex's mother reported that the teachers monitor and change Alex's program as necessary. She feels that this process is satisfactory "because if there was a need to do anything different, the willingness is there."

Additional information. Alex's mother, similar to the other parents, expressed concerns for the future. She stated:

> "My biggest worry is just that we're getting closer to the junior high year…If I could change anything for him, …I would love to see a school scene…where he is in the same scenario for another year, maybe even 2 years. …I hate to think about the disruption to the school routine that happens with the change to Grade 7.

Similar to Jim's father, Alex's mother discussed the time demands, and the reality of being a parent of a child with a learning disability. Alex's mother reported that being a parent of a child with learning disabilities is a "huge" responsibility and she has had to structure her life around Alex and school demands. She stated:

> "It's nice to expect the classroom teacher to accommodate and to work with you and so on, but I feel that the onus is on the parent to determine what is required …(and) to be a support to the process…If I'm not a hundred percent involved in that homework activity, he will get a zero tomorrow…without my involvement, he would not only have reading difficulties but a poor mark.

Case Study #4 – Comparison of the Stakeholder Perspectives

Similarities in the perspectives. All three stakeholders indicated that Alex does well socially. Alex and his mother both described the importance of the learning assistance classroom for Alex. Alex and his teacher both described the "fun" activities in class and both commented on the positive benefits of group and partner work. Alex and his teacher also described how Alex is provided with photocopies of notes, and how homework expectations are reduced.

Differences in the perspectives. There were several differences in the perspectives of the three key stakeholders. First, Alex was the only stakeholder to identify his involvement in the student leadership program as an important component of his Grade 5 experience.

Second, Alex, his mother, and his teacher all have differing perspectives regarding Math. Alex reported that he dislikes Math because "it's so hard." Alex's teacher indicated that in his opinion Alex is "fitting in fairly well" in the regular Grade 5 Math program and that Alex is completing most of the work on his own. Alex's mother reported that Alex is more "challenged" in the regular Math program and "enjoys it more."

Third, each stakeholder described Alex's learning difficulties in a slightly different manner. Alex described having difficulties with Math, Language Arts, and Science. Alex's teacher indicated that Alex has difficulties with remembering concepts, writing, and reading. Alex's mother reported that Alex has short term memory deficits.

Case Study #5 - Jason

Background information. Jason is 12 years old and is included in a regular Grade 6 classroom comprised of 22 students.

Setting. Jason was interviewed during the afternoon in a little room located beside the school office. During both interviews Jason was very quiet and answered many of the questions with one or two words. At the end of the second interview, Jason openly discussed his frustrations at school.

What the student likes in class this year. Similarly to David, Brian, and Alex, Jason likes his teacher this year. He stated, "I have a good teacher…she helps me." Jason likes Science this year because they do science experiments and he is doing "pretty well" in Science. He also likes recess because he "gets a little break (and)…sometimes plays tag and soccer."

What the student does not like in class this year. Jason reported that he does not like reading and doing book reports. He has had to complete three book reports this year and he found them to be very "hard."

How this year compares to others. Jason informed the interviewer that "Grade 6 is better than Grade 5." In Grade 5, "Nobody was helping me. I was getting tons of homework….I could never finish it." This year Jason is able to get his homework done and he feels "good" about that. In addition, Jason reported, "The teacher told me I've improved the most out of the whole class."

How the student is doing this year. Jason stated that things are going well this year because his "marks are pretty good." His highest mark is in Math, although he indicated that he is "not as good in Math as other people." Jason's lowest mark is in Language Arts. Jason reported that the low mark is due to the fact that his writing "is bad…I can't spell, and I can't think of what to write." Jason indicated that he has "over two" friends in the classroom and one of those friends is "a really good friend."

What helps the student and other children in the classroom learn. Jason was not sure what helps students in his class learn.

How the teacher helps the student. Similarly to David, Jim, and Alex, Jason reported that his teacher reduces the number of questions on assignments, and he is able to ask the teacher for help. Jason, like Brian, indicated that he does not always enjoy working with a partner on assignments. He stated, "I don't like it for reading, it's okay for doing questions." Rather than provide a reader like David, Jim, and Alex's teachers do, Jason's teacher provides Jason with a scribe on tests. Jason indicated that having a scribe "helps" and it "makes it easier." Similarly to David and Alex's teachers, Jason's teacher has one of his classmates "jot" notes for him from the board and provides Jason with additional time to complete assignments. Jason reported, "(if) there's more work then I have a longer time."

Additional information. Near the end of the interview Jason was very quiet and looked at the floor. After several long seconds he whispered to the interviewer, "Sometimes I cry…I can't control it." When the interviewer invited him to talk some more about why he cries Jason reported that he sometimes cries in class because of "work and stuff. Or some friends." Jason reported that "lots of things" make him frustrated.

Case #5 – Jason's Teacher

Background information. Jason's teacher, Mrs. W., has been teaching for 20 years. Mrs. W. indicated that she worked as a special needs teacher for many years. There are 27 students in this Grade 6 classroom. Eight of the 27 students have been identified as having a disability.

How students are assigned to the class. All of the Grade 6 students with disabilities are assigned to this Grade 6 classroom

Additional services provided to the teacher and the student. No additional supports are provided to the teacher, although there is a learning assistance teacher and a counsellor in the school that the teacher can consult if she desires. Jason does not receive any additional remedial support outside of the Grade 6 classroom. However, Jason does not take French, so he has one period, 5 out of 6 days, when he works independently on homework in the learning assistance classroom.

Setting. Jason's teacher, Mrs. W., was interviewed in her classroom after school.

Perspective on inclusion. Mrs. W. shared her perspective of inclusion with the interviewer.

> It really depends on the child, and I really feel that we should offer both (inclusion and learning assistance). ...Usually it's the ones who are really far behind that need to be out for a while, or for certain things. ...The pendulum keeps going back and forth. Inclusion, exclusion. ...when are people going to stop hitting their heads against the wall and realize we need to be in the middle and we need both.

Nature of student's strengths and weaknesses. Mrs. W. reported that Jason demonstrates a number of strengths and weaknesses in the classroom. Math is a strong point for Jason. "His memory for basic facts isn't good, but he certainly knows the process. Give him a calculator, and he can do it and he can show each step. But to remember the facts is difficult." Mrs. W. felt that Jason is "about average in organizational skills," although he needs to be closely monitored to make sure that he stays on track. Another strength for Jason is that he reads at grade level.

Jason has difficulties in the classroom with anything that requires writing and putting thoughts on paper. Mrs. W. feel that this is partly due to the fact that he has very poor fine motor coordination and spelling difficulties. She indicated that in testing situations Jason requires a scribe, otherwise he is unable to complete tests.

Mrs. W. reported that Jason experiences difficulties socially. She reported:

> He wants to be with the "cool" guys, so he started teasing – along with other people – the ones that were his friends. Then he realized his mistake. Oh, oh, too late. They're not trusting him as much.

Mrs. W. also reported that Jason's behavior is frequently a concern. Jason is often impulsive "and of course the children don't like him when he's like that, because he's in your face, bugs you, does silly things. But then the next day, once he's calmed down for a while, then they accept him."

Classroom adaptations. Similarly to the teachers in the previous case studies, Mrs. W. makes a number of instructional adaptations for children with disabilities in her classroom. Mrs. W. modifies her marking on tests and assignments, reduces the number of items on the tests, reduces the quantity of work required, reduces the amount of homework that must be completed, and implements partner and group activities. However, Mrs. W. reported that Jason "does not take kindly to help, " and does not like working with a partner because "he likes to be autonomous and do it on his own."

Impact of inclusion on the teacher. Similarly to the other teachers, Mrs. W. reported that the major impact of teaching children with special needs in the regular classroom was related to time. She stated, " It frustrates me, because I do have a special ed* background, and I can sit here and I can look at these children and I can say, they need this, this, and this… but I ain't* got the time."

Parent Contact. Mrs. W. reported that she has regular contact with Jason's mother. An agenda is completed daily and sent back and forth between home and school. In addition, Jason's mother frequently volunteers in the school and classroom, and keeps in contact with the teacher my phone.

Case Study #5 – Jason's Mother

Setting. Jason's mother was interviewed at home during two afternoons.

Background information. Jason's mother reported that Jason experienced a great deal of difficulty learning in the early grades. "He didn't learn how to read in kindergarten or Grade 1 the first time, or really in Grade 1 the second time." Jason's mother indicated that when Jason repeated Grade 1 the teacher did not provide additional support for Jason. She reported that the second year in Grade 1 "was a total write off… he learned nothing, and he hated school." She said:

> I would have liked to not put him through all that frustration in the first couple of years…I think that was really awful for him. Starting out with school, and knowing that he couldn't do what he was supposed to be doing, and just hating it, and not knowing what else he could do.

In Grade 2. Jason participated in a reading intervention program and his reading improved dramatically. Jason's mother said, " that was like magic. It was amazing…he started to read." Jason also started attending the learning assistance classroom in Grade 2. Despite the fact that Jason was receiving additional help in learning assistance, Jason struggled in the regular classroom during Grades 3, 4, and 5. Jason's mother described the situation:

> Grade 4 and Grade 5, he had a teacher who didn't understand him at all. The

> teacher would call me to the school all the time and tell me that he was lazy, and that he could do it if he wanted to, but he wasn't trying and he didn't want to. He knew that she didn't like him, so he didn't do his homework, and he didn't bother doing anything or trying anything because he knew she wouldn't be happy, whatever he did.

Jason's mother felt that Jason's participation in the learning assistance classroom helped Jason acquire needed skills and the learning assistance teacher was very supportive. She said, "She would always help me if I phoned her, even if I phoned her now. If I have a problem or something, and she would help me."

Child's strengths and weaknesses. Jason's mother reported that Reading and Math are strengths for Jason. Jason reads at grade level although his mother stated that she suspects that Jason does not always understand what is read.

Jason's mother reported that Jason experiences difficulties in writing. Jason is not able to spell and is unable to construct complete sentences.

Jason's mother also talked about Jason's difficulties with social skills. She stated, "He has some friends. Not really close friends…Occasionally one will come over, and rarely he will be invited over to somebody's house – which bothers him."

Description of this year and how it compares to other years. Jason's mother reported that Grade 6 has been "one of the best years he's ever had in school." She stated:

> He has a teacher who understands him…She takes away some of the work load… so he feels like he's accomplishing something. She knows when he's being lazy,

and when he really can't do it. She gets him the help he needs.

Homework has been a major source of frustration for Jason and Jason's mother reported, "It was torture in our house for homework." In Grade 6, Jason has been trying "really hard to get (homework) done at school," and the teacher has modified the amount of homework Jason is required to complete.

Concerns. Jason's mother has no concerns this year and reported, "It's been wonderful." She is not worried that Jason no longer attends the learning assistance classroom for remedial assistance and said, "I just don't think he understand things like spelling and stuff like that, and I'm not so sure he ever will, no matter how much we try and teach him."

Involvement with the school. Jason's mother reported that she has been very involved with the school as a volunteer throughout Jason's elementary years. This involvement has allowed her to keep track of how Jason was doing in school, but has taken a great deal of time and effort.

Jason's mother also attends the regular parent teacher interviews and communicates daily with the teacher with a daily communication book. She indicated that her needs as the parent of a child with learning disabilities are best met through consistent day to day communication and she prefers the use of the communication book because it helps her to track Jason's progress in school. She spoke less favorably about parent-teacher interviews, "You never get to the bottom of anything. You have to go and see the teacher some other time." In addition, Jason's mother indicated that if she has a problem she still contacts the learning assistance teacher for help.

Parent's perception of IPP goals. Jason's mother indicated that Jason has had an IPP developed for him every year since Grade 2. She met with Jason's teacher at the beginning of year and reviewed the IPP. Jason's mother could not specifically remember what Jason's IPP goals were for this year and thought the goals were "things like him getting all his work done, stuff like that."

Additional information. Similar to the parents in the previous case studies, Jason's mother expressed concerns about the future. She reported that Jason is enrolled in the transition program for Grade 7. She said, " I'm so excited about this. I think it'll be so great for him."

Jason's mother discussed Jason's long term future with the interviewer. She reported that she spent a lot of time "worrying about what's going to become of him when he grows up. I've done a lot of that. What's he going to do if he can't read and write?" She indicated that she has a more positive attitude about the future now that she has seen how well he has done in Grade 6. "When I see that he's not bad at everything, he's good at quite a few things, quite bright in a lot of things. So I think he'll find his way somewhere, and he'll be okay."

Case Study #5 – Comparison of the Stakeholder Perspectives

Similarities in the perspectives. The stakeholder perspectives are similar in several ways. Jason and his mother both reported that Grade 6 is one of the best years ever for Jason and he is doing well this year. They both also indicated that Jason's teacher plays a major role in this success. Jason and his mother also reported similar perspectives in regard to book reports. The perspectives of the three stakeholders were also fairly similar in regards to Jason's strengths and weaknesses.

Differences in the perspectives. The three stakeholders vary in their description of the intensity of Jason's frustration with school. At the end of the second interview, Jason quietly reported that he cries in class "because of work and stuff – or friends." He was very clear that although things are going well and the fact that the classroom adaptations help him a great deal, he is still so frustrated with everything that he cries. Jason's mother indicated some frustration on Jason's part but did not report the intensity of frustration that Jason did. Similarly, Jason's teacher did not describe the same level of frustration for Jason.

That concludes the discussion of the individual case studies. The following section examines the differences and similarities in the perspectives of the stakeholders across case studies beginning with comparisons across students, then comparisons across teachers, comparisons across parents, and finally, a comparison across the differences and similarities in the triads in each case study.

Comparisons Among Stakeholder Groups

Comparisons among students. All five students were boys with learning disabilities attending Grade 5 and 6 classrooms in a single suburban school district. The three Grade 6 boys, David, Jim, and Jason, are fully included in the regular classroom but attended the learning assistance classroom in previous years. However, all three boys have two or three periods a week when they receive extra help in a small group or have time to complete homework. The two Grade 5 boys, Brian and Alex, still receive additional instruction for Language Arts in the learning assistance classroom, but spend the majority of their time in the regular classroom. A number of common themes were identified among the students. Table 1 displays these themes.

Table 1

Comparisons among students

Themes	Students				
	David	Brian	Jim	Alex	Jason
Likes	Friends Teacher	Friends Teacher	Friends	Friends Teacher	Friends Teacher
Comparison to last year.	Better this year.	Better this year.	Better this year.	Better this year.	Better this year.
Preferred Adaptations	Partners Notetaking Reduced questions.	Reduced questions.	Partners Notetaking Reduced questions.	Partners Notetaking Reduced questions.	Notetaking Reduced questions.
Participation in Learning Assistance	Receives help. More time to finish work.	Receives help. Fun activities. No teasing allowed. Would like to not be in LA next year .	Receives help. Quieter than regular class. Learned to concentrate and work harder	Receives help. Quieter than regular class. Learned strategies.	
Difficulties	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework

Teacher gives additional help on homework at school .	Very frustrated. Would like to finish at school.	Very frustrated. Has extra time to complete at school. Would like less homework.	Gets extra help from teacher at school.	Works on homework at school. Last year could not finish homework. Frustrated.

All five of the students commented that one of the things that they liked best was having friends in the regular classroom. Two of the students reported that they had friends in the learning assistance classroom as well as friends in the regular classroom.

Four of the five students indicated that one of the things that they liked most this year was their teacher. The fifth student, Jim, had experienced a change in teachers at Christmas time and had many substitute teachers in his classroom from January to June.

All five of the students reported that the grade that they are currently in is better compared to previous years. These comments were based on the students receiving improved marks on their report cards this year and positive comments from their teacher. In addition. two of the students indicated that they are doing better this year even though the work is harder.

All of the students explained how the teacher helps them in class and how the teacher helps other students. However, each of the students expressed different preferences as to the acceptable adaptations. All of the students indicated a preference for a reduced number of questions on assignments and tests. Three of the students indicated a preference for working with a partner and four of the students appreciated assistance with taking notes from the board. One, student, Brian, reported that he preferred to do things the same way as everyone else and would like to receive an "honest" mark on his assignments.

All of the students expressed positive comments about their current or past attendance in the learning assistance classroom. The students reported that the slower pace of the assistance classroom helped them and they found it easier to get help. Jim and Alex reported that it is easier to concentrate in the learning assistance classroom and Alex indicated that he learns strategies in the learning assistance classroom.

All of the students described difficulties with homework despite the classroom adaptations made to assist these students with learning disabilities. Two of the students, Brian and Jim, expressed overwhelming frustration with homework and indicated they would like to be able to complete more homework at school. Three of the students described how they receive extra help for homework from their teacher at school.

Comparisons among teachers. The teachers participating in this research have been teaching for 13 - 30 years. Only one of the teachers held a teaching degree with a specialization in special education, the others had regular education training. Three of the teachers had experience teaching in special education settings. All of the teachers had been involved in professional development activities focusing on teaching children with special needs. All of the teachers indicated that they have large class sizes in terms of overall student numbers with a large percentage of children with special needs (21% -38%). In three of the five classrooms, all of the children with special needs enrolled in that particular grade were placed in one classroom. Two of the teachers reported that, in their school, equal numbers of children with special needs were placed in each classroom to distribute the workload. A number of common themes were identified among the teachers. Table 2 displays these themes.

The type of support that each teacher received in the school to meet the needs of children with special needs in their classroom varied from classroom to classroom. Three of the teachers reported that they received support from a student support team in the school and two of these teachers indicated that the student support team was very helpful to them. Two of the teachers reported that there was a learning assistance teacher in the school to support teachers of children with special needs. One of these teacher reported that he meets with the learning assistance teacher frequently. The other teacher indicated that she requires the learning assistance teacher's support to meets the needs of children in her class. Three of the teachers indicated that they also received teacher assistant support in their classrooms to help meet the needs of the children with special needs. Two of these three teachers reported that the assistant worked with the children out of the class and one of the teachers reported that the assistant worked in the classroom with the children. This teacher reported that having an assistant in her classroom caused her more "stress" and work.

The teacher perspectives on inclusion were very similar. All of the teachers reported positive aspects of inclusion and three of the teachers discussed the necessity of providing a mix of inclusion and remediation. Two of the teachers reported that, for

Table 2

Comparisons among teachers

Themes	Teachers				
	David's Teacher	Brian's Teacher	Jim's teacher	Alex's teacher	Jason's teacher
Support Provided	Student Support Team Assistant Time	Student Support Team Assistant in classroom – more stress	Student Support Team Assistant Time	Consultation with LA teacher. Release time.	Consultation available. Does not use.
Perspective on Inclusion	Positive. Child needs to benefit from inclusion Not for severe disabilities.	Positive Child needs to benefit from inclusion. Not for severe disabilities.	Positive A blend seems to work out best.	Positive A mix of inclusion and remedial instruction is needed.	Positive. Need to offer both inclusion and support.
Adaptations	Testing. Marking. Reduced questions. Partners and	Testing Marking. Reduced questions. Partners and	Testing. Marking. Reduced questions. Partners and	Testing. Reduced questions. Partners and	Testing. Marking. Reduced questions. Partners and

	group work.	group work.	group work.	group work.	group work.
	Homework.	Homework.	Homework.	Homework.	Homework.
	Notetaking			Notetaking	Notetaking.
	Motivation		Motivation.	Motivation	
Impact of Inclusion	Time.	Time.	Time.	Time.	Time.
	Challenge.	Stress.	Extra burden		Frustration.
	Rewarding.	Benefits.			
Parent Contact.	Regular.		Regular.	Regular.	Daily.
	IPP discussed with parents.		IPP discussed with parents.	IPP discussed with parents.	IPP discussed with parents.

inclusion to be successful, the child with special needs has to have the skills to participate in the classroom.

All five teachers reported providing a range of classroom adaptations. All of the teachers reported using testing adaptations, marking adaptations, reduced questions on assignments, partner and group work, and adapted homework assignments. Three of the teachers reported notetaking adaptations and three of the teachers discussed providing additional motivation for students. There were differences in the type and number of adaptations made for the student in the case study and these differences were the result of the preferences of the child and/or the learning difficulties the child was experiencing.

The major impact of inclusion on the teacher as identified by all five teachers was time. Four of the five teachers indicated that having children with special needs in the classroom is a challenge that results in extra stress and workload for the teacher. However, two of the teachers also described the rewards of teaching children with special needs.

Three of the teachers described having regular contact with the parents including phone calls and parent teacher conferences. One teacher reported daily contact with the parents. Four of the teachers indicated that the parents were involved in the IPP process and that the IPP's are updated frequently. Brian's teacher reported that she has little contact with the parent and the parent and the learning assistance teacher communicate frequently.

Comparisons among parents. Six parents were interviewed in this study. Three mothers, one father and David's mother and father were interviewed. Of these parents, three had backgrounds in education, one was a firefighter, one a scientist, and one a stay-at-home mother. All but one of the parents were interviewed in the home situation. One was interviewed at work. A number of common themes were identified among the parents. Table 3 displays these themes.

All of the parents reported that their child experienced difficulties in the early grades in school and frustration with not being able to access help. All of the parents reported positive experiences with the learning assistance classroom, and three of the parents reported continued reliance on the support of the learning assistance teacher.

All of the parents indicated that the current school year was the best so far. Two

Table 3

Comparisons among parents

Themes	Parents				
	David's Parents	Brian's Mother	Jim's Father	Alex's Mother	Jason's Mother
Early School Experiences	Negative in Grades 1 and 2	Difficulties in K, 1 and 2.	Difficulties in K, and 1.	Difficulties in 1 and 2 with no support.	Difficulty learning in early grades.
Perspective on Learning Assistance	Helped child.	Critical for child's success. Majority of contact with LA teacher.	Helpful.	Helpful. Still relies on the LA teacher.	Helpful Still relies on LA teacher for Help
Comparison to other years	Best year	Difficult year, most productive	Better than last year.	Improved a great deal this year.	Best year ever.
Difficulties	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework
Involvement with the School.	Regular contact. Not sure of	Daily contact with LA teacher. Read IPP at	Regular contact. Parent believes	Regular contact. IPP discussed	Daily contact IPP

	IPP goals, IPP meeting, and how to be involved.	beginning of the year, did not remember goals. Time commitment.	child not on IPP Time commitment	and updated. Time commitment. Huge responsibility.	discussed. Cannot remember IPP goals Time and effort required.
Future	Mother not concerned. Father worried about junior high.	Concerned about the future and junior high.	Concerned about transition to junior high.	Concerned about junior high.	Concerned about the future and junior high.

of the parents reported that the current school year has also been the hardest. All of the parents described difficulties regarding homework. They commented that there was too much homework, and completing homework was a time consuming and frustrating process. Four of the six parents reported that a large time commitment is required to track what is going on at school, problems that arise, and their child's performance.

The parents described different levels of involvement in the IPP process. None of the parents could describe the goals on their child's IPP. One parent was convinced that his child was not on an IPP, one set of parents expressed uncertainty as to what the IPP was supposed to accomplish. One parent indicated that she signs the IPP at the beginning of the year. Two parents reported being kept up to date on changes to the IPP. Two parents reported that they have not been involved in IPP meetings. One parent indicated uncertainty in how to be involved in the IPP process.

Five of the six parents expressed concerns about their child's future. Their main concerns were related to the transition to Grade 7 and junior high school. Only David's mother indicated that she was not worried about junior high. One parent described her concerns about her child's long term future.

Comparisons among case studies. A number of similarities and differences among the perspectives were common among all the case studies. Table 4 displays these similarities and differences.

In all of the case studies the stakeholders expressed similar perspectives regarding the student's social skills, and in four of the case studies similar perspectives were articulated regarding how the student is doing academically this year. In two of the case studies, the stakeholders described the student's strengths and weaknesses in a similar fashion. In one case study all three stakeholders identified the student's distractibility and organization skills as a concern. In three of the case studies, homework was identified as a concern by all of the stakeholders.

In three of the case studies, the stakeholders presented differing perspectives regarding the nature of the student's learning difficulties. Differences were noted in the perspectives of the parents and the teachers with regards to the areas that the student was experiencing difficulties in and the degree of these difficulties.

In three of the case studies, the parents and the teachers described different

Table 4

Comparison of similarities and differences among stakeholder perspectives

Themes	Case Studies				
	Case Study #1	Case Study #2	Case Study #3	Case Study #4	Case Study #5
Similarities in Perspectives	Doing well this year	Academic progress.	Doing well this year.		Best year academically.
	Positive social skills.	Social skills deficits	Friendships	Does well socially	Identified social difficulties.
		Identified strengths and described difficulties	Distractibility And organization skills as difficulties.		Identified strengths and weaknesses
	Homework	Homework	Homework		
Differences in Perspectives	Learning difficulties.		Learning difficulties.	Learning difficulties.	
	Content of IPP And process. Report Card marks		IPP and the IPP process		Content of IPP
		Level of frustration		Frustration with Math.	Level of frustration

experiences with the IPP. One parent thought that his child was not on an IPP, two parents reported that they could not remember the goals in the IPP, and one of these parents did not believe that there had been an IPP meeting this year. The teachers all reported that an IPP was in place, that a parent meeting had been held at the beginning of the year to discuss the IPP, and that the goals were updated frequently.

Students, parents, and teachers had different perspectives regarding the level of frustration the student was experiencing. In three of the case studies the student indicated a high level of frustration in class or with a particular subject than the parents or the teacher who did not report the frustration or described the degree of frustration differently.

That concludes the presentation of the results. Overall, a number of similarities and differences were found in the perspectives of the students, teachers, and parents that provide insight into the inclusive classroom experience. These perspectives are discussed further in Chapter 5, followed by a comparison of the results with the research from the literature review, a presentation of the practical implications of the data and implications for further research.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter serves several purposes. First, this chapter provides a discussion of the results of the data analysis and a comparison of the results with the research from the literature review. Second, the practical implications and implications for further research raised by the study will be presented. Finally, the limitations of the study will be discussed.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of the stakeholders in inclusive classrooms. In this discussion, the perspectives of students with learning disabilities, their parents, and regular education teachers are presented, as well as the similarities and differences in perspectives between the students, teachers, and parents across all of the case studies.

Student perspectives

The results of the student perspectives compare favorably with the findings of the literature review. This comparison is displayed in Table 5.

The students in the present study reported that the two things that they liked best about their inclusive classroom were having friends and the classroom teacher. The finding that students found the inclusive classroom a good place for developing friendships is consistent with previous research (Klingner et al., 1998; Vaughn & Klingner, 1998). The finding that four out of the five students reported that the best thing this year was their teacher was very interesting. The students talked about how their

Table 5

Comparison of student perspectives to the literature

Themes	Case Studies				
	Case Study #1	Case Study #2	Case Study #3	Case Study #4	Case Study #5
Friendships	CON Klinger et al., 1998	CON Vaughn & Klinger, 1998	CON	CON	CON
Teacher Important	NAR	NAR		NAR	NAR
Best year ever	CON Jenkins & Heinen, 1989	CON	CON	CON	CON
Likes learning Assistance	CON Jenkins & Heinen, 1989	CON Klinger et al., 1998	CON Padeliadu & Zigmond, 1996	CON	
Teasing/ alienation reported	CON Guterman, 1995	CON Shoho et al., 1997			
Preferred adaptations	CON Fulk & Smith, 1995	CON Does not like grading adaptations Bursuck et al., 1999	CON Vaughn et al., 1993	CON Vaughn et al., 1995	CON

Difficulties with homework	**CON** **Nelson et al., 1996**	**CON**	**CON**	**CON**	**CON**

Note. CON = confirmed in the literature, NAR = no available references

teacher helped and supported them in class, and described positive feedback they received regarding their performance. It appears that one of the most important aspects of a successful inclusive classroom experience is the relationship that the student develops with the teacher and how this relationship is perceived by the student.

All of the students in the present research reported that this year was the best year compared to previous years, and that they are doing "better this year." This may be related to the fact that students generally indicate a preference for the setting that they are currently in (Jenkins & Heinen, 1989). However, this finding may be due to the fact that the students' needs were currently being met with classroom adaptations, and the positive relationships that they were experiencing with their teachers and peers.

The students in this study reported that they liked attending the learning assistance classroom because they engaged in "fun" activities and received additional help. These responses are consistent with finding of previous studies on student perceptions of resource room attendance (Jenkins & Heinen, 1989; Klingner et al., 1998; Padeliadu & Zigmond, 1996). One student, although he like learning assistance, reported missing activities when attending the learning assistance class (Padeliadu & Zigmond, 1996), and two of the students receiving pull-out support in the learning assistance classroom experienced teasing (Guterman, 1995) or alienation (Shoho et al., 1997). One interesting finding of this study was the fact that, although all the students had previously attended, or were currently attending the learning assistance classroom, and commented favorably regarding how they learned to concentrate, learned strategies, and learned skills in the learning assistance classroom, their preference was to be in the inclusive classroom.

The students in this study described a number of classroom adaptations that they preferred. All of the students indicated a preference for reduced questions on assignments and exams, and four students required assistance in copying notes from the board. These preferences are consistent with those identified in the literature (Fulk & Smith, 1995; Vaughn et al., 1993). However, the students in this study expressed differing perspectives regarding adapted assignments, grading adaptations, and group or partner work. This finding is also consistent with the literature that indicates some students with learning disabilities prefer that no adaptations be made (Vaughn et al., 1993), mixed preferences of students with learning disabilities to work with partners (Vaughn et al., 1995), and mixed responses from students with learning disabilities regarding grading adaptations (Bursuck et al.,1999). One student described how he did not like having an assistant working with him in class, and described how being required to work with this assistant negatively impacted on his attitude and classroom behavior. These findings indicate a need in the inclusive classroom to match classroom adaptations to the strengths, weaknesses, and preferences of individual students rather than taking a "one size fits all" approach. Teachers should engage in dialogue with students regarding their individual preferences and include students in the decision-making process as adaptations that are negatively perceived by the student may have a negative impact on the student and possibly on the classroom, and the teacher.

The student perspectives expressed in this study regarding homework compare favorably to student perspectives expressed in the literature review. The students reported that they found homework to be a slow, difficult, and frustrating process (Nelson et al., 1996). All of the students in this study reported either satisfaction with, or a need to have, the opportunity to complete homework at school, where they can access help and support from the teacher. Homework policies in inclusive classrooms need to be examined as students experience overwhelming frustration dealing with homework at home. Perhaps structured time with support at school would help to alleviate some of the frustration.

Teacher perspectives

The present study revealed a number of teacher perspectives regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities into the classroom, that are similar to perspectives expressed in the literature review. These perspectives are displayed in Table 6.

The teachers in the present study reported positive perspectives regarding inclusion (Bunch et al., 1997; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Villa et al.,1996). Two of the teachers reported a reluctance to teach students with severe disabilities in the inclusive classroom (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). All of the teachers in the present study indicated that lack of time is a major concern for teachers of inclusion classrooms and that inclusion causes teachers additional stress and frustration (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). A finding of this study was that three of the teachers reported that,

Table 6

Comparison of teacher perspectives to the literature

Perspectives	Case Studies				
	Case Study #1	Case Study #2	Case Study #3	Case Study #4	Case Study #5
Positive perspective on inclusion	CON Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996	CON Bunch et al., 1997	CON Vila et al., 1996	CON	CON
Reluctance to teach students with severe disabilities	CON Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996	CON			
Lack of time. Stress and frustration.	CON Scruggs & Mastropieiri, 1996	CON	CON	CON	CON
Need for a continuum of options			CON Palmer et al., 1998	CON	CON
Use of effective strategies in the classroom	RCL Whinnery et al., 1991	RCL	RCL	RCL	RCL
Need to	CON	CON	CON	CON	

collaborate	Austin, 2002	Minke et al. 1996	Soodak et al., 1998	
Student support teams	AMB Austin, 2002	AMB Logan et al. 2001	AMB	AMB

Note. CON = confirmed in the literature, RCL = research contradicts literature, and AMB = Ambiguity in the literature.

in their opinion, it is important for schools to provide both the inclusive experience as well as remedial support. This finding is similar to the position held by many parent and advocacy groups, that there is a need to reserve a continuum of program options (Palmer et al., 1998).

Unlike the previous research that identified concerns as to whether or not effective strategies are implemented in inclusive classrooms (Whinnery et al.,1991), the teachers in this study reported extensive use of classroom adaptations in testing, marking, assignments, instructional groupings, homework, note-taking support, and motivational support. The teachers in the present study also discussed how they apply each of these classroom adaptations dependent on the individual needs of the student with learning disabilities in the classroom, identifying why certain strategies are successful for that particular student.

The teachers in the present study were all master teachers with many years of experience including children with special needs in their classrooms, in settings with collaborative support. All but one of the teachers spoke strongly about the importance of having the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues to problem solve and plan as part of a team. This finding is consistent with the reports by Austin (2002), Minke et al. (1996), Soodak et al. (1998), and Villa et al. (1996). However, the success of the student support teams reported by the teachers in this research was contrary to findings by Logan et al., (2001), who found that student support teams were not functioning as designed, where teachers thought the purpose of the team was to test and place students with whom they had not been successful in special education. Collaboration in an inclusive educational setting can enrich the teaching experience, help the teacher plan programs for students with special needs, and assist the teacher with problems in the classroom. However, it is important that the role and function of the team be clarified, and that time be provided during the school day for successful collaboration to occur.

Parent perspectives

Analysis of the parents' responses provides insight into several areas. The results of the comparison of the parent perspectives to the literature review are displayed in Table 7.

The parents in the present research described in detail the difficulties their child experienced in the early grades, expressed negative attitudes towards school personnel, and described difficulties accessing support for their child. Early adverse experiences of parents resulting in negative parent perspectives were also reported by Soodak and Erwin (2000). In addition, Stoddard and Valcante (2001) reported that it is not uncommon to hear parents say they were told "he'll grow out of it" by a classroom teacher, only to find later that their child had a disability and could have benefited from intervention if the disability had been identified. These comments underline the importance of having a

Table 7

Comparison of parent perspectives to the literature

Perspectives	Case Studies				
	Case Study #1	Case Study #2	Case Study #3	Case Study #4	Case Study #5
Difficulties in early school years	CON Soodak & Erwin, 2000	CON Stoddard and Valcante, 2001	CON	CON	CON
Lack of knowledge regarding IPP	CON Gibb et al., 1997	CON Green & Shinn, 1994	CON		CON
Concerns about the future	CON Algozzine et al., 2001	CON	CON	CON	CON
Need for parent involvement/ homework		CON Duhaney et al. 2000	CON Waggoner & Wilgosh, 1990	CON	CON
Best year	CON Abramson et al., 1983	CON Mylnek et al., 1982	CON	CON	CON

Note. CON = confirmed in the literature.

process in place in kindergarten and Grade 1 to identify children who are experiencing difficulties in school and provide appropriate supports for these children rather than waiting for a pattern of failure to be established before providing support. This may mean educating teachers in early grades of the early warning signs for learning disabilities and providing them with checklists and information to refer to. It can take years to overcome the negative attitudes towards learning and the negative behavior patterns that become established as a result of school failure.

All of the parents reported that they currently have regular contact with the school and two of the parents have, or have had, daily contact with the teacher. Unfortunately, there was considerable lack of knowledge regarding the child's IPP among the parents. Four of the parents could not describe any of the IPP goals that their child was working on. This suggests that the parents are not updated regularly on their child's progress on the IPP goals. Two of the parents were not even sure that they had attended an IPP meeting and these parents also expressed uncertainty as to the purpose of the IPP. One of the parents was convinced that his child did not have an IPP. This finding is of concern and consistent with the literature (Gibb et al., 1997; Green & Shinn, 1994). It appears that more effort is needed to inform the parents about the IPP document and the parent's role in the IPP process. In addition, it is important that progress on the goals and objectives be clearly articulated to the parents.

Although the students in the present study were in Grades 5 and 6, all of the parents expressed concerns regarding the transition to junior high even though they were not asked to speak on that particular topic. Several parents commented that they were grateful that their child had been accepted into a special program but were aware that the placements in the special program were limited. The transition from elementary school to middle and high school can be difficult for parents (Algozzine, O'Shea, & Algozzine, 2001). Due to these difficulties more information or more involvement with the process might be of assistance to parents. It may also be necessary to expand the alternatives or options available to students with learning disabilities at the junior high level.

Similarly to the research in the literature review, the parents in this study reported the challenges of dealing with homework and the time commitment and responsibility involved in keeping up with the homework as well as with the involvement with the school. This is similar to the results reported by Duhaney et al. (2000). Waggoner and Wilgosh (1990) also reported that parents consistently identified a need to be involved in the educational experience of their child as well as a need for instruction in the home which involved commitment, ability, frustration, perseverance, and time.

All of the parents in the present study reported that the current school placement in the inclusive classroom had been the best ever, even though in some cases it had also been the most difficult year. This may be due to the increased self-esteem, expanded social relationships, and interactions (Abramson et al., 1983; Mylnek et al., 1982), increased willingness to participate in group activities, and in some cases improved grades and attitudes in an inclusive program (Gibb et al., 1997). This may also be due to the students' reported relationships with the current teacher, or the fact that the current classrooms have many classroom adaptations in place that are helping the students participate in the classroom in a way that they have not been able to in the past.

Multiple perspectives

The present study examined the perspectives of triads of students with learning disabilities, their parents, and teachers on specific aspects of their experience. A number of important similarities and differences in the perspectives are compared to the literature in Table 8.

There were differing perspectives regarding the content of the IPP and the process in the majority of the case studies. The teachers reported having an IPP process where the parents were consulted regarding the IPP, and updated on progress on the IPP throughout the year. The parents reported a lack of knowledge regarding the IPP goals, uncertainty regarding the process and how to be involved, and even, in one case, uncertainty whether or not the child was even on an IPP. Mixed parent perceptions of student IPPs have also been reported in the literature (Gibb et al., 1997; Green & Shinn, 1994). However, no research study comparing the perspectives of students, teachers, or parents regarding the IPP process was found in the literature The differences in perspective found in this research suggest that there is a need for schools to provide parents with information regarding their child's progress on the IPP throughout the year, in way that is easily understood. Parents need to be provided with information regarding the IPP process and how they can be involved. It is also necessary to provide the parents with opportunities to be involved, in a setting that is comfortable and conducive to parent involvement.

In three of the five case studies, there were differences in the perspectives regarding the nature of the students' learning difficulties. Similar differences in student and parent perspectives regarding the nature of students' learning disabilities were noted by McLoughlin et al. (1987). The differences in the perspectives of the parents and the teachers might be related to lack of opportunities for open communication and the difficulties with the IPP process identified previously.

Table 8

Comparison of similarities and differences in perspectives to the literature

Differences/ Similarities	Case Studies				
	Case Study #1	Case Study #2	Case Study #3	Case Study #4	Case Study #5
Differences in perspectives regarding IPP.	NAR		NAR		NAR
Differences in perspectives in nature of learning difficulties	CON McLoughlin et al., 1987 Compared groups of parents/students		CON	CON	
Differences in perspectives on student frustration		NAR		NAR	NAR
Similarities in perspectives regarding academic progress	AMB McLoughlin et al., 1987 Compared groups of parents/students	AMB Gerber & Popp, 1999 Compared groups of students/parents.		AMB	AMB

	and found differences.	and found similarities.			
Similarities in perspectives regarding social standing and friendships	AMB McLeod et al., 1994 Compared groups of teachers/students and found differences	AMB Pavri & Monda-Amaya, 2001 Compared groups of teachers/students and found differences.	AMB McLoughlin et al., 1987 Compared groups of parents/students and found differences.	AMB Ritter et al., 1999 Compared student/parent/ teacher perceptions and found all groups agreed on improved social skills, etc.	AMB
Similarities in perceptions on homework	NAR	NAR	NAR		

Note. *CON = confirmed in the literature, NAR = no available references, and AMB = Ambiguity in the literature.*

There were also differences in the perspectives of the stakeholders in three of the case studies regarding the level of frustration reported by the student and the level of frustration or absence of information about frustration reported by the parent and teacher. Three of the students expressed a high level of frustration at school. Bra[illegible]nd Jason were so frustrated with their school situation that they acted out in class, or cried. Alex was very frustrated with being moved back into the regular classroom for Math. In all of these cases the teachers and parents in these case studies did not report the same level of student frustration, or did not comment on the student frustration at all. In the case of the Alex who was frustrated with Math, the teacher and the parent reported that they were convinced that the student was much happier being included for Math instruction. Research studies discussing differences in student, teacher, and parent perceptions regarding the level of student frustration were not found in the literature. However, differences in the perspectives of the stakeholders regarding inclusion activities have been noted. Lehmann et al. (1999) found important differences in the perspectives of the students, teachers, and parents participating in transition activities. Pavri and Monda-Amaya (2001) examined the perspectives of teachers and students and found that teachers' choices of interventions to support students differed from the students' preferences of social intervention strategies. These results and the research described above underline the importance of exploring student perceptions regarding their school experiences and including students in the decision-making process.

In the comparison between stakeholder perspectives in the present study it was found that there were similarities in the perspectives regarding how the student was progressing during the school year, and regarding the social standing and friendships of the student. In two of the five case studies there were similarities across the perspectives of the stakeholders regarding the social abilities of the student and in three of the case studies there was agreement regarding difficulties with homework. Similarities in the perspectives of student, parents, and teachers regarding the social abilities of the students were also noted by Ritter et al. (1999) who found that parents, students, and teachers agreed that the students were more confident in the inclusive classroom. Other studies (McLeod et al., 1994; McLoughlin et al., 1987; Pavri & Monda-Amaya, 2001) found differences in the perceptions of students, parents, and teachers regarding the social standing and friendships of students with learning disabilities.

A limited number of studies were found in the literature that examined the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers in inclusive classrooms. Lehmann et al. (1999) examined student, parent, and teacher perspectives regarding high school transition activities. Ritter et al. (1999) reported similarities and differences in the perceptions of middle school students, their parents, and teachers. Other studies examined the perspectives of students and teachers (McLeod et al., 1994; Pavri & Monda-Amaya, 2001) and the perspectives of teachers and parents (Seery et al., 2000). A number of studies described the perspectives of a number of stakeholders without comparing the perspectives (Bennett et al., 1997; Lombardi et al., 1994; Pugach & Wesson, 1995; Wilezenski et al., 1997). The present study utilized a case study approach to examine the perspectives of triads of students with learning disabilities, their parents, and regular education teachers. This research paid attention to each individual in the case, and similarities and differences between the student, parent, and teacher perspectives were identified across common themes. In addition the data were analyzed across cases and similarities and differences across students, parents, teachers, and across cases identified. The results of this research demonstrate that each stakeholder in the inclusive classroom brings a multitude of different experiences and perspectives to the situation and that important similarities and differences in the perspectives exist. Consideration of the perspectives of the stakeholders in the inclusive classroom may assist in the identification of barriers and lead to the development of successful inclusion programs.

That concludes the discussion of the findings of the present research, and of the relevance of the findings to the literature review.

Implications

The results of the present study suggest several practical implications for schools and for further research.

Practical Implications

Most parents want to be partners in the process of inclusive education. They commit time and energy to ensuring their child's success in school. Often official communication regarding the IPP between the home and school takes place one to several times a year depending on need, and information flow tends to be from the school system to the parents. It is important for schools to provide parents with information regarding their role in the IPP process and encouragement and opportunities to become active partners. However, there are important differences in the perspectives of teachers and parents that can result in miscommunication or a lack of communication. Therefore, it is also important to provide parents and teachers opportunity to share common perspectives so they can communicate effectively about a child's needs.

It is evident from the present research that students with learning disabilities can provide invaluable information regarding their "lived" experience in the inclusive classroom. Adaptations or experiences perceived by the student to be negative can have a negative impact on the student and in the classroom. Conversely, knowledge regarding adaptations that the student perceives to be helpful can help the teacher build a positive learning environment. It is important to include student input into program development and evaluation in the inclusive classroom in a process that involves students, as well as teachers and parents.

The teachers in the present study identified the need for adequate planning time and having access to collaboration with their peers. The teachers expressed favorable perspectives regarding shared responsibility, decision-making, and instructional partnerships either in a partnership with special education personnel or in a student support team. Their positive perspective is consistent with emerging outcomes of school-based collaboration that demonstrate success for students with disabilities in general education when educators collaborate (Idol, Nevin, & Paolucci-Whitcomb, 1994). Unfortunately current funding issues in schools make it very difficult for school administration to provide the time and professional support necessary for successful collaboration. It is necessary to find new and innovative ways to build collaboration in schools. This requires concerted effort by leadership personnel to create and foster an environment where collaboration is possible, including supports and incentives for collaboration to allow time for face-to-face problem-solving and planning.

Further Research

The results of this study raise a number of questions that are in need of further research. First, the present study reported the perspectives of five boys, in Grades 5 and 6, with learning disabilities. Further research is required to examine the perspectives of female and male students to see if gender similarities or differences exist. Due to the fact that the implementation of inclusion at the junior high and secondary level may be quite different from that at the elementary level, there is a need for studies to further investigate the experiences of students with learning disabilities across the different levels.

Second, this study identified the importance of examining student perceptions of schooling. Further research is needed to explore ways in which students' perceptions can be better incorporated into decision making and how their perceptions might improve services in regular classroom settings.

Third, the results of this research provide an interesting, although limited, picture of some of the practices employed by regular education teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Another question suggested by the research results would focus on the impact of different adapted educational approaches on the academic progress of students with learning disabilities. Do continued reduced assignments and expectations in the classroom result in reduced academic gains?

Fourth, the present research focused on the perspectives of students with learning disabilities, the parents of the students, and the regular education teachers of the student. However, there are other stakeholders in the inclusive classroom that are impacted by inclusion and were not included in this studies. Further research including other key stakeholders in the inclusive classroom such as the regular classroom peers and their parents, or other students with special needs included in the same classroom, would provide a more detailed picture of the inclusive classroom.

Fifth, very little research was found that examined the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers in the inclusive classroom. Each stakeholder in inclusion classroom brings a multitude of different experiences and perspectives to the classroom and important similarities and differences in the perspectives exist. Further research to identify these similarities and differences may assist in the identification of barriers to successful inclusion.

Finally, the perspectives of each of the key stakeholders in the present study were completely confidential and no information regarding any stakeholders' perspective was shared with any other stakeholder. Many times during the interview process the stakeholders expressed a desire to know about the perspectives of the other stakeholders. It would have been helpful to clarify differing points of view if there were some opportunity for the stakeholders to address others' points of view and clarify their own position either privately or in a situation where they could talk with each other.

Limitations

Although the present research provided insights into the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers on the inclusive classroom, the conclusions of this research should be interpreted with several cautions related to subject, situational, method, and other limitations.

Subject Limitations

There are a number of limitations related to the subjects involved. All the participants were located in a single suburban school district. All participants were volunteers and appeared to be forthright in their discussion with the researcher.

All of the teachers had been recommended for participation in the study by the school administration, had been teaching for many years, had experience with children in inclusive settings throughout their careers, and had been involved in upgrading their skills through professional development activities. It is possible that the researcher was referred to teachers who demonstrated positive attitudes and practices towards inclusion.

All of the students were recommended for the study by their teachers and all were boys in Grades 5 and 6. It is possible that the teachers recommended students and parents for the study who would report positive interactions with the school. However in two school situations it was reported that only one student in the school met the criteria for the study. The students demonstrated varying levels of willingness to talk to the researcher and ability to express ideas. However, each student was visited and interviewed a number of times over several weeks at different times to establish rapport and consistency. In addition, the influence of the parent and the teacher perspectives was minimized by interviewing the students individually and by guaranteeing confidentiality.

Situational Limitations

Several classroom limitations may have had a direct effect on the data. Although all the classrooms had large pupil/teacher rations with a large percentage of children with special needs included in the classroom, each classroom was individual in respect to the complexity of interactions, classroom activities, and dynamics in the classroom. It is also possible that the central school board office representative directed the researcher to schools that demonstrated positive policies and practices towards inclusion.

Method Limitations

There are also method limitations that may have had a direct effect on the data. Interview data may have been subject to recall error, reactivity of the interviewee to the interviewer, and self-serving responses (Patton, 1990). Questioning techniques may have improved with experience and the questioning within the interviews might possibly limit the study. It also possible key issues were overlooked or avoided, or there was distortion due to personal bias, anger, anxiety, and lack of awareness. To minimize the possible impact of these effects, an interview guide was utilized to ensure that the same general categories of information were discussed with each participant. The impact of these limitations was also minimized by conducting the interviews in a conversation-like manner in a natural setting.

Other Limitations

There are also other limitations in the present study that are reflective of the subjectivity in the research process in qualitative designs. Possible research bias was offset through the use of multiple sources of information, bracketing, detailed fieldnotes, and audio-recording during the interviews. Despite the precautions taken bias must be recognized as a limitation and individual subjectivity may have entered the research process.

This was a qualitative, multi-site, multi-person study, and as such provided a rich, well-grounded description of inclusion in a specific context. This study contributed to our understanding of the complex nature of inclusion and helped to illuminate many issues and variables. The fact that the findings converge across several case studies provides some evidence of replication of findings.

Conclusion

Inclusive classrooms are complex organizations and the success or failure of inclusive classrooms cannot be totally determined in terms of the evaluation of learning academic subject matter and measures of peer relationships. It is necessary to examine the interrelationship of student views of the inclusive classroom with those of teachers and parents, and to learn from each perspective, as well as from the similarities and differences among the perspectives. This investigation of student, teacher, and parent perspectives in each inclusive setting, has enhanced our understanding of the reality of the inclusive classroom. An analysis of student, parent and teacher perspectives also provided information on strategies in the inclusive classroom that are and are not effective, and provided a basis for discussion on how the perceptions might be used to improve services in the inclusive classroom setting.

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Appendix A

Letter and Written Consent Form – Teacher

February 2000

Dear Teacher

I am a doctoral student at the University of Alberta in Educational Psychology, and I am conducting a study to learn more about how students with learning disabilities experience the inclusive elementary school classroom, as well as what their parents and teachers experience. I am writing to ask for the opportunity for you to share your experiences with me.

The interview will include questions about your perceptions of the student's academic skills, peer relationships, instructional modifications, and the success of the student in the classroom. The interview will be approximately 1 hour in length, on each of 1 or 2 occasions, and would be arrange at a time and location that is convenient for you.

The interview will be tape recorded so that it can be played back in order to write a summary. The tape will then be erased and no one but the investigator (me) will have access to it. All the information will be kept confidential and will not include your real name.

The results of this study may be published in an academic journal, but the names and school locations of the participants will be confidential.

You will not be subjected to any risk of psychological harm, and are free to not answer any of the questions. You may withdraw from participation in the study at any time, without consequence.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and there will be no financial remuneration for involvement.

If you have any questions abut the research, please contact me at 922-5804 (home number).

Thank you very much. I appreciate your consideration of this request, and hope that I may look forward to sharing time with you.

Sincerely,

Linda Chmiliar

Teacher Consent Form

Name of Teacher ________________

Name of Student ________________

School ________________

Grade ________________

I have been informed about the research Linda Chmiliar is conducting, and I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that all information collected will be handled in a confidential manner. I am free to withdraw consent, and I am free to withdraw from participation.

I agree to participate in the research study described above and share my experiences with Linda Chmiliar.

Signature of Teacher ________________ Date ________________

Appendix B

Letter and Written Consent Form – Parent

February 2000

Dear Parent or Guardian

I am a doctoral student at the University of Alberta in Educational Psychology, and I am conducting a study to learn more about how students with learning disabilities experience the inclusive elementary school classroom, as well as what their parents and teachers experience. I am writing to ask for the opportunity for you and your child to share your experiences with me.

Your child will be asked to talk about his/her experiences in the classroom during an open-ended interview approximately 45 minutes in length, on each of 2 or 3 occasions. The interview with your child will focus on what they like and don't like in school, as well as what helps them to learn. All of the interview sessions will take place in a quiet room at your child's school and would be arranged at a time that is acceptable to the you and the teacher.

I would also like the opportunity to talk to you, the parent, about your experiences. The interview with the parent will include questions about parent contact with the school, and impressions of your child's educational program. The interview with the parent will be approximately 1 hour in length, on each of 1 or 2 occasions, and would be arranged at a time and location that is convenient for the parent.

All the interviews will be tape recorded so that they can be played back in order to write a summary. The tape will then be erased and no one but the investigator (me) will have access to it. All the information will be kept confidential and will not include you or your child's real name.

The results of this study may be published in an academic journal, but the names and school locations of the participants will be confidential.

You and your child will not be subjected to any risk of psychological harm, and are free to not answer any of the questions. You and/or your child may withdraw from participation in the study at any time, without consequence.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and there will be no financial remuneration for involvement.

If you have any questions abut the research, please contact me at 922-5804 (home number).

Thank you very much. I appreciate your consideration of this request, and hope that I may look forward to sharing time with you and your son/daughter.

Sincerely,

Linda Chmiliar

Parent Consent Form

Name of Student ________________

Date of Birth ________________

Address ________________

____

Phone # ________________

School ________________

Grade ________________

Parent/Guardian Name ________________

I have been informed about the research Linda Chmiliar is conducting, and I understand that my, and my child's participation, is completely voluntary and that all information collected will be handled in a confidential manner. I and/or my child are free to withdraw consent, and are free to withdraw from participation.

I agree to have my child participate in the research study described above to share his/her experiences with Linda Chmiliar.

Signature of Parent/Guardian ________________ Date ________________

I agree to participate in the research study described above and share my experiences with Linda Chmiliar.

Signature of Parent/Guardian ________________ Date ________________

Appendix C

Letter and Written Consent Form – Student

February 2000

Dear Student

I am a doctoral student at the University of Alberta in Educational Psychology, and I am conducting a study to learn more about how students with learning disabilities experience the inclusive elementary school classroom, as well as what their parents and teachers experience. I am writing to ask for the opportunity for you to share your experiences with me.

You will be asked to talk about your experiences in the classroom during an interview approximately 45 minutes in length, on each of 2 or 3 occasions. The interview will focus on what you like and don't like in school, as well as what helps you to learn. All of the interview sessions will take place at a time and place that are acceptable to your parents and teacher.

I will also be talking to one of your parents, and your teacher.

The interview will be tape recorded so that it can be played back in order to write a summary. The tape will then be erased and no one but the investigator (me) will have access to it. All the information will be kept confidential and will not include your real name.

The results of this study may be published in an academic journal, but the names and school locations of the participants will be confidential.

You will not be subjected to any risk of psychological harm, and are free to not answer any of the questions. You may withdraw from participation in the study at any time, without consequence.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and there will be no financial remuneration for involvement.

If you have any questions abut the research, please contact me at 922-5804 (home number).

Thank you very much. I appreciate your consideration of this request, and hope that I may look forward to sharing time with you.

Sincerely,
Linda Chmiliar

Student Consent Form

Name of Student ________________

Date of Birth ________________

Address ________________

____

Phone # ________________

School ________________

Grade ________________

Parent/Guardian Name ________________

I have been informed about the research Linda Chmiliar is conducting, and I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that all information collected will be handled in a confidential manner. I am free to withdraw consent, and I am free to withdraw from participation.

I agree to participate in the research study described above and share my experiences with Linda Chmiliar.

Signature of Student ________________ Date ________________

Appendix D

Interview Guide – Teacher

Background Information

Years of teaching experience

Years teaching students with disabilities

Number of students in the class

Number of students with disabilities in the class

How students with disabilities are assigned to the class

Courses taken on students with disabilities

Services that are provided to the student in/out of the classroom

Philosophy of inclusion

Nature of the student's difficulties

Interview Guide

Tell me about any instructional modifications or teaching arrangements you make in the class.

What impact do different adapted educational approaches have on instruction?

How does the student with learning disabilities fare in the classroom, and on the playground?

What would help the student with learning disabilities to be more successful?

Why?

Tell me about your involvement with the parents of the student with learning disabilities.

Appendix E

Interview Guide – Parent

Background Information

Age of child

Grade

Nature of the learning difficulties

Interview Guide

Tell me about your child's education program this year.

How is the program affecting your child?

What, if any, concerns do you have?

What does your child say about school this year?

Tell me about any involvement you have had with the school.

What, if any, changes would you make.

How does this year compare to other years? What makes it better or worse?

Tell me about any IPP goals that may have been set for your child this year.

Do you think they are being achieved? Why or why not?

Appendix F

Interview Guide – Student

Background Information

Age

Grade

Number of students in class

Interview Guide

Tell me what you like in your class this year. What don't you like?

What, if anything, is different about your class this year compared to other years?

How are you doing in school this year? What do you do well in? What do you have difficulties with?

What helps the kids in the classroom learn better? What helps you learn better?

If you are having difficulties with your classroom lesson and needed extra help, how do you get help? How does your teacher, or others help you?

What kinds of help work best for you?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your classroom or about school this year?